

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE, MA
BOARD OF HEALTH
October 18, 2021

Meeting Called to Order: 2:10 PM

Quorum Check: Confirmed

Members Present: Linda Cocalis (LC), Richard Volpe (RV) via conference call, Dr. Louis Fazen (LF)

Members Absent: None

Others Present:

Ken Lacey (KL) Health Agent

Tom Revane (TR) Revane Builders

Ian Neill (IN) Resident

Andy Checheta (AC) Rapscaillon Brewery

Laura Sherris (LS) Health Department Administrative Assistant

2:10 PM – LC reads open meeting dialogue.

2:11 PM – New Business – LC motions to hold the review of September meeting minutes in abeyance until the next meeting; LF 2nd; AIF. LC, LF, RV: unanimous.

2:12 PM – LC states that a new health department administrative assistant has been hired, and introduces LS.

2:12 PM – New Business – COVID19 updates – KL states that current confirmed cases are 22 this week with 1 hospitalization to our knowledge, and 1 COVID19-related death this week of an 83-year-old resident; the case counts over the past month have fluctuated between 19 and 26; current cases include 2 in children under 12 years old; 7 out of the 22 current cases are in unvaccinated individuals. LC suggests that the town begin tracking vaccination status with confirmed and hospitalized cases. LC and LF discuss current lack of data and conflicting data; LC would like to focus specifically on Sturbridge data at this time. KL provides update regarding a COVID vaccination and booster vaccination clinic location; the JC Penney site has been turned down as there are too many obstacles to make the site appropriate for the clinic. LF asks for clarification regarding the clinic. KL states that Fallon Ambulance company is contracted by the state to host, staff, and run the clinic, and will not require any town resources; the goal is to administer 1,000 vaccinations per day. LC states that Harrington Hospital is currently offering boosters for staff. LF asks what boosters are currently available, as he is unsure at this time; LC responds that the Pfizer booster vaccine is currently the only one approved under emergency authorization. LC and LF discuss the availability of boosters, approval status, and emergency authorization, and the appropriateness of making vaccination recommendations to the public.

2:27 PM – 126 Westwood Drive well variance – KL states that the hearing notice was not properly posted and advertised, and a continuance is requested. LC states that the hearing will be put into abeyance due to lack of posting.

2:30 PM – 48 Hillside Drive well variance – KL states that the hearing notice was not properly posted; involved parties TR and IN are in attendance and it is agreed that the matter will be discussed informally at the scheduled hearing time of 2:40 PM.

2:32 PM – Flu Clinic – LC states she would like to discuss the town's flu clinic. KL states that potential site are being looked at, with Burgess Elementary School and Tantasqua as potential sites; last year a drive-thru clinic was hosted, but the clinic nurses would not like to do the drive-thru again this year due to potential repeat of last year's low outdoor temperatures. LC states that she thinks Tantasqua would be a better clinic site. LC asks LF about his experience with flu clinics; LF responds that he has experience with towns offering multiple clinic days coordinated with school and first responder scheduling, and utilizing public health nurses and nursing students. KL states that public health nurses are typically unavailable during the week due to their work schedules and that the clinic is currently planned for a weekend. KL states that Tantasqua would be a good clinic site as the cafeteria allows for controlled traffic flow. LC, RV state they have no issues with the site.

2:37 PM – 48 Hillside Drive – LC opens informal discussion of complications with well installation. TR states that there was an issue with a pin marker being moved inadvertently, resulting in the well being installed 4 feet off from the planned location; the well has a current setback of 11 feet from the property's side boundary. LC states that it is the town, not the state, that has a setback bylaw. KL states that a permit was granted for a 20-foot setback, and the well now has an 11-foot setback, which meets state guidelines. LC states that abutters should be notified of the well location for construction purposes. LC asks if TR brought the issue to the town's attention; TR states that he did, and that it was an honest mistake with construction. KL and LC state that the issue would need to be discussed further as it is unusual. LC states that she is inclined to grant lenience as TR came forward and it would be costly to repair. LF agrees that it seems acceptable. KL states that the abutting properties are large lots, and any future issues with adding septic to the lots should be avoidable. LC states that the abutters should be made aware of the issue. KL states that due to the lack of posting, the board cannot grant a variance at this time; LC states that she would be agree to grant the variance in the future as long as the other board members are in agreement, and that a special meeting for the variance hearing may be possible as the construction season is coming to an end. RV does not have any issue with the proposal, but agrees that the board does not have enough information to grant the variance at this time. LF is in agreement, but does not want to move forward with the variance without following the proper procedure. KL and LC clarify that the variance is not being granted at this time; KL will provide information to TR regarding how to apply for a variance hearing and how to provide notification to abutters. Discussion is concluded.

2:51 PM – Walker Pond well pollution updates – LC would like an update regarding the Walker Pond well pollution; KL states that the next step in the resolution is moving forward, and that the last step took approximately 3 months to complete.

2:53 PM – South Shore Drive emergency permit – KL states that the department is issuing an emergency permit for the property, to be drafted this afternoon. KL states that the goal is to lower the water level by approximately 1 foot to bring the level to approximately 3 feet of water above the culvert. LC states that she would like the level to be lowered; she is unsure of previous measurements, so a comparison would be difficult. LC states that the point was to lower the pond level in order to keep the beavers. RV states that he does not have anything to contribute at this point in the discussion. LF states that he is unaware of the issue, and thus will not contribute to the discussion. LC states that she would like to move forward with the plans as they stand.

2:58 PM – Recycling Center update – LC asks if there is any news regarding the recycling center. KL states that the town is waiting on the third proposal for a new compactor, and waiting on a new hire for Saturdays. LC states that the center manager has expressed concerns regarding safety after an accidental death at another town's facility, and that LF had expressed concern regarding the accessibility of the recycling containers; she states that assistance is offered to residents for lifting items into the containers. LF asks if a consultation for a redesign of the center is possible. LC states that the center's footprint is limited, and that the availability of funding for a project is not expected. LF asks if RV has any comments. RV states that the issue would have to go to town meeting for funding, and that due to lack of space at the center, he is unsure of what could be done. LF states that if the center is meant to be a benefit of residents' tax money, perhaps it would be good to improve the facility to make it more convenient and accessible to residents, which might increase the center's profits. LF states that he would be willing to contact an acquaintance at the Southborough DPW to look at the center on an informal basis. LC states that she is unsure if the Southborough DPW contact would understand Sturbridge's needs, and if the facilities are comparable. LC states that recycling responsibly is becoming more difficult, as no one wants to buy the waste products. LC states that from an economic point of view, there have been no accidents and the center is fine for the time being, with no need to spend money at this point; if LF would like to bring in his Southborough contact for an informal consultation, she feels that would be fine. LF states that he believes it would be worthwhile for the town; if the center is the oldest in the commonwealth it may be time for updates to make it more user friendly. LC states that LF could schedule a time with the center manager for an informal consultation. RV states that he is in agreement.

3:11 PM – 484 Main Street grease diverter variance – LC opens the hearing regarding the 484 Main Street, AKA 3 Arnold Road, grease diverter variance. KL states that Rapsallion Brewery is looking to open a tasting room, and due to a town variance, the brewery is required to provide food; Rapsallion is looking to take over the kitchen in the lower level of their current premises to use for food preparation; they are planning a simple menu, not requiring a restaurant or food truck. AC states that they are still planning on being a pub, but need to meet the town's minimum food requirements in order to have a liquor license. KL, LC, and LF discuss and clarify town regulations, and that a grease trap is required for food establishments. RV states that if only light fare will be offered, he believes a grease trap will not be needed; LC states that the greasiest item on the proposed menu is a French dip sandwich. AC states that Rapsallion is willing to drop any food items the town would take issue with. AC states that at this point the business is looking to get the doors open, and is looking for the most cost-effective way to meet

town requirements; they believe an under-sink grease trap should suffice for the opening. AC states that Rapsallion is looking to build out a full restaurant at a future date, at which point they would install a full external grease trap. KL states that the board currently has the proposed tasting room kitchen and menu plans, which are in review by the health inspector. LF has a question about tasting room occupancy and any concerns regarding ventilation, COVID, etc; KL states that the occupancy has already been set by the building department, and that there are no concerns at this point. LF asks if there are any restrictions regarding seating during COVID; KL states that the state of emergency has been lifted. LF asks for clarification regarding what the variance is in reference to; KL clarifies that it is to grant a variance for an under-sink grease trap instead of an external grease trap. LC states the issue will be revisited when Rapsallion is ready to expand their kitchen.

3:25 PM – LC motions to grant the variance for the external grease trap for 484 Main Street, AKA 3 Arnold Road. LF 2nd, AIF. LC, LF, RV: unanimous. LC states that she is unsure about how the variance for the location's current occupant, Homefield Brewery, was passed; LC and KL discuss processes required for brewery waste and Homefield's need for an external grease trap, and that the lack of an external grease trap seems to have been an oversight.

3:29 PM – KL states that regular health department business is busy this time of year, and that permit renewals are currently in process. KL states that the health agent and health inspector will be away at a conference for two days this week, but the health department office will be open.

3:31 PM – LC motions to adjourn the meeting. LF 2nd; AIF. LC, LF, RV: unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Sherris

Health Department Administrative Assistant