

FLORHAM PARK BOARD OF HEALTH

April 14, 2021

Minutes

Present: Peter Kleban, Stanley Wisnewski, Marianne Nucci, Sabrina Edmunds, Kathleen Greene (arrived at 7:24 pm) and Jo-Anna Finegan

Also present: Kristen Santoro (Council Liaison), Timothy Zachok (Senior Registered Environmental Health Specialist – REHS), and Maryann Lang (Board of Health Secretary)

Absent: Thomas Michalowski, Tana LaPlaca, Raymond Holmes

This meeting was conducted virtually, through “Zoom”. The meeting was called to order at 7:14 pm, due to waiting for a quorum of members to be present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Ms. Lang took attendance, and stated that the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act had been met.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Finegan made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2021 meeting. Ms. Nucci seconded the motion, and all members present approved.

Approval of Reports:

Ms. Nucci asked if the COVID 19 cases, reported in the Pequannock Township monthly reports, are occurring in senior facilities or the town in general? Our public health nurses were not in attendance to answer the question. Mr. Zachok responded that he wasn’t sure, as the nurses take the information on the cases and conduct contact tracing. He felt the cases were not in the senior assisted living facilities, but mostly in the younger population. Ms. Santoro commented that the Florham Park schools have had to go virtual a few times these past few weeks.

Ms. Edmunds made a motion to approve the reports which included: Vital Statistics monthly report for February and March 2021; Pequannock Township monthly report for February and March 2021; Pequannock Township year-to-date report; Pequannock Township inspection activity report for Florham Park, for February and March 2021. Ms. Nucci seconded the motion, and all members present approved.

Communications:

Email from Joseph Guerin – July 4th events

Mr. Guerin was seeking guidance from the Board of Health (BOH) as to the feasibility of having the July 4th events. Health Officer, Thomas Cantisano, responded to Mr. Guerin’s email. Ms. Santoro stated that she is on the July 4th Committee and will advise them of the Board of Health’s recommendations, as well. She also stated that the July 4th events will take place on Monday, July 5th. Ms. Santoro stated that there is the fear that the committee will prepare for a small event, and the State will open up fast. The committee is looking for outside consensus on how to proceed.

Mr. Kleban stated that by June 30th, seventy five percent of the state is expected to be vaccinated. This projection was prior to the pause of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. He felt that even if the State is at fifty-sixty percent vaccinated, people will come together anyway this summer. He asked the Board for their opinions regarding July 4th events. He stated he is seeing an uptick of COVID 19 at the hospitals, but that does go up and down.

Ms. Edmunds thought it was okay to have the event. Mr. Wisnewski agreed. He stated that he is on the Gazebo Committee, and they are having the concerts this summer. Ms. Finegan stated that she felt the Gazebo concerts were different because people can be six feet apart. For the crowd at the July 4th event, it will be difficult to keep six feet apart. She felt that the fireworks will be difficult to regulate. She questioned how the prevailing rules will be enforced at the events.

Communications (continued):

Mr. Wisnewski asked how the committee can gauge attendance. The committee may go ahead and commit to expense, and then people may be fearful to come. Ms. Finegan stated that she didn't feel that would be an issue, as she noticed a lot of people attended indoor Easter services. She added people will gather anyway, so they probably won't stay away from July 4th events.

Mr. Kleban's recommendation would be that there not be a beer garden, rides or games. There are too many people too close together. Unable to socially distance, and keeping everything clean can be an issue. Ms. Santoro agreed.

Ms. Finegan questioned whether food would be allowed. Mr. Kleban responded that he would lean not to have food. People congregate in the area of the beer garden, games, and food. It would be difficult to socially distance. Ms. Greene stated that there can be a crush of people around the food trucks. Mr. Zachok commented that the Pequannock Municipal Building has had food trucks recently, and they did well with social distancing. Mr. Kleban agreed that you can distance around food trucks as long there is enough room.

Ms. Finegan commented that the July 4th Committee will have to decide if it pays to do away with the beer garden, games and food, as these fund the event. Ms. Santoro agreed that fundraising will be a big topic for the July 4th Committee meeting this evening.

Mr. Wisnewski commented that it is not up to the BOH to put a firm stop to beer garden and rides. The Board can make a strong recommendation to not have them. Mr. Zachok agreed. Ms. Santoro stated that recommendations from Police Chief Joseph Orlando for Office of Emergency Management (OEM, Health Officer Thomas Cantisano and BOH will be taken into account when making a decision. Mr. Wisnewski asked how what was discussed this evening will be communicated to Joe Guerin. Ms. Santoro said she will be attending a July 4th meeting after the BOH meeting, and will provide a summary.

Mr. Wisnewski asked how Board members felt about having the fireworks. Mr. Kleban felt you can have fireworks, because there is plenty of space. People can be in other locations and still see the fireworks. Others agreed.

Ms. Finegan asked about the parade. People on curbs are in their own groups, but participants can't socially distance. Ms. Edmunds asked if anyone has reached out to the previous year's participants, to get their thoughts on whether they want to participate. Other members thought this was a good idea. Mr. Kleban felt the parade would be okay to hold, but it is up to the discretion of July 4th committee. Ms. Santoro stated that the July 4th committee will see what Morris Plains does for Memorial Day parade.

Report from Health Department Staff:

Timothy Zachok

Nothing to report, everything is status quo.

New Business:

None

Mr. Wisnewski asked if BOH membership is full. Ms. Lang responded in the affirmative.

Unfinished Business:

None

Ratification of Licenses:

The Board ratified licenses issued in February and March 2021.

Public Hearing - Privilege of the Floor:

Mr. Kleban opened the meeting to the public at 7:35 pm. Ms. Lang asked each person to provide their name and address for the record:

Public Hearing – Privilege of the Floor (continued):

Donald Quigley, 6 Insley Road, Florham Park

Mr. Quigley commented that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently advised that the odds of catching COVID from objects is extremely low. For the July 4th rides and games, this may not be an issue. If you can't have rides, games and beer garden, who is going to be there? I don't think you will make any money.

Mr. Quigley asked for the Board's sense on the vaccines. We know all medications have side effects. What are the contraindications for each of the vaccines? Who should/should not be getting them? Ms. Greene responded that for this information he should visit the CDC website www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety. The CDC is conservative and there is reliable, vetted information on their site that has been peer reviewed. She stated that she trusts the information, having been involved with the pharmaceutical side of things.

Maria Quigley, 6 Insley Road, Florham Park

Ms. Quigley stated that she is trying to get a sense of what the Board of Health does, and if it is an advisory Board. Mr. Zachok responded that it is an autonomous Board, that makes policy and ordinances. She asked if the Board has made an ordinance specifically in regards to COVID 19. Mr. Zachok responded that there aren't local health ordinances specific to COVID 19. She asked if the Board gives guidance on mandates and policies made at the State level. Mr. Zachok responded in the affirmative. He suggested that she reach out to Health Officer, Thomas Cantisano, at tcantisano@pegtwp.org, with any questions. The Health Officer also provides information on a weekly basis, that is posted to the Borough website at www.fpboro.net.

Ms. Quigley went on to comment that the State numbers of COVID 19, for Florham Park and surrounding towns, is low. She expressed her concern at the level of restrictions still being discussed a year into the pandemic. Mr. Zachok responded that the guidance that the Health Officer provides comes from the Governor's Executive Orders, at the State level. Ms. Quigley responded that those mandates are recommendations, not law. Mr. Zachok responded that the Executive Orders are laws. We don't have input on them, and we must follow and enforce them. The CDC issues recommendations.

Ms. Quigley questioned that if the Board of Health has the ability to make policy, what is your guidance on masking a year into the pandemic? Ms. Finegan responded that the Board of Health cannot override Executive Orders. Mr. Zachok stated that the Executive Orders, on masks, comes from the Governor. No local body can override it. Ms. Quigley provided an example of inconsistency, in applying the mask mandate at an indoor volleyball game, at her daughter's school. Her daughter's team was required to wear masks, opposing team was not. Mr. Zachok responded that he would have to review the Executive Orders. There are over seventy five at this point, some taking away restrictions from previous ones. He felt that if it was an indoor sport, with close proximity among athletes, masks would be required. He stated that all of the Executive Orders are online for the public to view. It was suggested that Ms. Quigley reach out to the Health Officer, as he is well versed with the Executive Orders. Mr. Cantisano's contact information was provided again. Ms. Quigley thanked the Board and stated she will reach out to him.

Sergio Bordenabe, 55 Roosevelt Boulevard

Mr. Bordenabe, asked if there are no Executive Orders against the July 4th parade/events, will the town be able to go ahead with it. Mr. Kleban responded that if there is no Executive Order against it, the event could be held. Ms. Santoro stated the main problem with the July 4th event is the planning. Trying to get something together and then things may change suddenly.

Tara McSorley

Ms. Lang acknowledged Ms. McSorley, but there was no response. Therefore, Mr. Kleban closed the meeting to the public at 7:57 pm.

Adjournment:

Ms. Greene made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 pm. Ms. Finegan seconded the motion, and all members present approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryann Lang, Board of Health Secretary