

BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES – May 6, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Thomas McLaughlin, MD held virtually at 7:00 P.M. Also, in attendance were Sheila Laffy, Member; Dutrochet Djoko, Member; Judith Ryan, Public Health Nurse; and, Ade Solarin, Director of Public Health.

1. Administrative

- a) Notice of the meeting as posted by the Town Clerk
- b) The minutes of March 4, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

2. Variance Request

- a) Dumpling Garden

Derek Chan, owner of Dumpling Garden, was present to request a Variance to add sushi to their menu. A plan review has been submitted to the Board of Health.

Ada explained that this request is a specialized food process that varies from the code. Varying to the code may present a danger to the public health, therefore an approved variance is required. This establishment is requesting permission to hold rice for sushi at room temperature by using the acidification process rather than holding the rice at room temperature that is required by the food code. The food code requires 41 degrees or less for cold holding, and 145 degrees or higher for hot holding. The acidification process includes mixing the rice with vinegar and keeping the mixture at a PH of 4.3 or less. Based on the plan submitted if the PH is greater than 4.3 within one hour of preparation, they are proposing to add vinegar and then retest the rice as the corrective action. They are also proposing if the PH is greater than 4.3 within two hours of preparation or greater than 4.6 after two hours of preparation, they are willing to discard the rice as the corrective action. And after five hours in the warmer, they are willing to discard the rice. The hazard plan has been submitted but is missing a key component. Raw fish is a common ingredient in sushi and contains full bacteria and viruses. Many species of fish are known to have parasites which can cause illness in humans. Most species of fish need to be frozen before being served raw to kill the parasites. Food code requires that they should be frozen at -4 degrees Fahrenheit for 7 days or at -35 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 hours to insure parasite destruction. The only raw fish that does not need to be frozen are those species that parasites are not a natural hazard. Dumpling Gardens can freeze the fish on the premises and must document the proper freezing temperatures and times achieved. The times and temperature records must be kept for 90 days. Alternatively, Dumpling Gardens can purchase fish that has already been frozen if they first obtain a letter from the supplier stating that the fish was frozen according the time and temperature specifications. The recommendation to the Board is to conditionally approve the variance request with a requirement that Dumpling Gardens submits an updated hazard plan that includes the missing information prior to starting the acidification process.

Dumpling Gardens has agreed to submit a revised hazard plan which will include the missing information. None of their purchases are from grocery stores but certified state vendors. They will provide a letter from the supplier to the Board of Health to complete the hazard plan.

Dr. McLaughlin stated that another establishment had requested the same variance/process which was approved by the Board and have not heard anything negative.

MOTION: Mrs. Lally moves that the Board accept the conditional variance for Dumpling Garden; Dr. McLaughlin seconded; all in favor

3. COVID-19 UPDATES

(1) Non-Covid

Judith Ryan reported on the following:

Danvers submitted the disaster plan and it was accepted. The deliverable was met with the drive-thru flu clinic conducted in October.

Social Seniors is scheduled to reopen 2 days a week, Mondays and Thursdays, and there are 10 clients who are interested in attending.

Non-Covid Investigations – there was a hepatitis C; Campoli bacteria case; 2 tick borne; and an influenza case.

One of the facilities in Town had 3 cases of legionella so the state became involved and the facility is following all the required steps. In February they had a 64% positivity rate. Once the disinfection of the system took place, only 11 positives which brought them down to 23% positivity rate. At that point they had filters installed which decreased it another 1%. On a regular basis they will have an ongoing disinfection supplementals through a continuous effort. Going forward they will be testing once a month, changing filters every 90 days and Ryan will follow up with them this month.

In one of the assisted living facilities there was a nuero virus outbreak, 2 confirmed but 20 with symptoms, and 3 ended up in the hospital. The facility is now fully open with restrictions and no further cases.

(2) Current Case Data

174 – March 5th through April 1st

214 – April 2nd through May 6th

29 - on a weekly basis from April 29th to May 6th

Age breakdown – 6-17, 9 cases; 19-30, 8 cases; 30-50, 5 cases; 50-67, 7 cases

Ryan continues to work with the schools, businesses, and group/long term care.

(3) Vaccination

Ryan did not run the vaccine rate, but around 15 or 16% for at least one dose, which includes the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Ryan working with regional clinics to immunize with Pfizer at Salem State and will continue if the state provides the doses.

4. Re-opening for Town departments

As the cases decrease, the plan is to open the Town offices safely. Solarin has been meeting with department heads and employees to help craft specific re-opening plans. It began with the distribution of a survey to the Town employees to gage the status of vaccinations and protocols in place. The responses are expected by May 7th.

As part of the measures taken the Danvers vaccination rate has been added as one of the metrics, 45 percent of Danvers residents have been fully vaccinated, and 16 percent have received the first dose. Collectively 41 percent of residents of the 10 communities have been fully vaccinated and 57 percent have received a first dose as of April 29th.

Solarin has worked with the Library, Council on Aging, Recreation and Town Manager/Assistant Town Manager on an opening plan. A strategy for reopening will be decided by May 14th and by May 21st there will be a clear communication plan. The public will receive communication via the Town website. The goal is to reopen May 31st with restrictions.

The Social Senior program has been cleared to reopen. The Library, Gordon, and Children's' rooms have been cleared to reopen to the public via appointment. Some of the recreational activities within the Recreational department have been cleared to reopen, such as leagues.

5. Review of the Health Department's operations

Since Solarin's start date of April 5th, he has been reviewing regulations and operations of the department. There is not a dedicated administrative staff to the Health Department, shared with three departments. There are also inadequate resources such as inspection kits that aren't available. And in terms of technology, the website does not serve the purposes intended. Solarin has been continuously updating the website to provide the much-needed information to the those it serves. As far as organizational structure, there is not adequate staff or space.

6. Review of the existing BOH regulations, fee structure and permitting process

Solarin has been reviewing the existing regulations and some need to be updated, others need to be withdrawn. At future meetings, findings will be presented to the Board for review and approval.

Some of the fees associated with the permits are inconsistent with the amount of work required for the permit. These findings will be presented to the Board for review and approval.

There are applications not listed on the permitting website which is being updated. These new applications will also have fees associated with them. These too will be shared with the Board. Recommendations will be made to the Board prior to implementation. The fees associated with these new permit applications will require a vote.

7. Short-term and long-term goals of the department

Short-term goals will be to work with the Town on opening Town offices in a safe and healthy manner as soon as possible. Confident that it will adhere to the timeline. Pools and Sandy Beach are on the list of opening. Applications for Farmers Market, special events and camps will begin to come in.

Long-term goals will include updating the Board of Health regulations, the fee structure and the permitting process and resolving the inadequate staffing and space issues.

With no further business at hand, the Board adjourned.

Respectfully submitted for your approval,



Ade Solarin
Director of Public Health

DRAFT