

Town of Concord  
Board of Health

Minutes of the Meeting  
Tuesday, October 20, 2020

**1. OPEN MEETING**

Dr. Deborah Greene, Chairman opened the public meeting stating that it was being held on the Zoom platform in accordance with the Town’s Policy Directive and Guidelines issued on April 1, 2020 as amended. She read a brief statement outlining meeting protocol and noted that the meeting was being recorded and would be available for later viewing on the Town’s website. All Board votes will be taken via roll call. Dr. Deborah Greene introduced herself and conducted an attendance roll call.

Roll Call for Meeting:           Dr. Deborah Greene, Chairman – present  
                                          Jill Block, present  
                                          Mark Haddad, present  
                                          Alma Healey, present  
                                          Raymond Considine, present

Susan G. Rask, Public Health Director, present  
Karen Byrne, Administrative Assistant, CBOH, present

Audience:                       Jane Hotchkiss, Select Board, Liaison; Greg Guarriello, FinCom; Phil Posner,  
                                          Concord Bikes; Aiyana Currie, Concord Bikes

**2. DISCUSSION**

Concord Bikes is a group of residents who have worked with various town staff and the community to promote healthy, fun, safe biking in the town. Phil Posner, a member had requested an opportunity to reintroduce a study that was commissioned by Mark Fenton in 2014 (done in conjunction with the Health Division and its’ Healthy Concord Initiative<sup>1</sup>) – active transportation (walking biking) as well as seek support to encourage outdoor activities through the “Bike to School” initiative that encourages school children to ride their bikes to school.

Mr. Posner explained that the “Bike to School” initiative has been very successful and according to volunteer bike counting more than 5,000 car trips had been avoided in the drop off lines; the “non-scientific” data collection only includes elementary and middle schools; during the pandemic, this achieved the social distancing goals desired by the School Department and on the buses. He said it has been a positive endeavor.

Mr. Posner said that he was hopeful the Concord Board of Health would agree to express its support of the Concord Bikes efforts to promote and accomplish the work recommended in the Fenton Report as well as review and perhaps endorse becoming an Alliance Member of MassDOT’s Safe Routes to School Program. He explained that participation makes the schools/town eligible to apply for MassDOT/SRTS grant money, technical assistance and support (to implement and address some of the safety measures in the Fenton Report), etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to her membership on the BOH; member Jill Block was the consultant hired by the Town with Grant Funds as part of the Health Concord Initiative

Board Member Jill Block said that she was fully in support of endorsing any measure that would get kids active and off the school bus if the roads were safe and biking was doable. Both she and her husband Wade Rubenstein have been active in this initiative for many years. After a short discussion, Board members asked Mr. Posner to forward the Safe Routes to School information to the Health Division Staff and they would review it at the November meeting.

### **3. DISCUSSION – COVID-19 UPDATES**

#### Halloween Activities

The Board reviewed the Town of Concord Halloween Advisory as it related to Halloween events and safety during Covid-19.<sup>2</sup> Public Health Director Susan Rask advised that in conjunction with the Town Manager’s Office, the Town was advising residents to avoid Higher Risk and Moderate Risk activities as outlined by the CDC (traditional door to door trick or treating).<sup>3</sup>

#### Schools and Covid-19 Cases

Public Health Director Rask advised the Board that the protocols in place in the schools and in conjunction with the Health Division and Public Health Nurse Tricia McGean were active and working well at the moment. She noted that of the cases that have been reported in the schools, notifications and subsequent contact tracing and quarantines had gone smoothly. Ms. Rask commended School Superintendent Laurie Hunter for her conservative but effective measures for notifying affected parties and subsequent cleanings and school closures if necessary. Board member Mark Haddad asked whether any of the contacts of the reported positive cases had become sick; PHD Rask said that she was not aware of any other illnesses other than the reported positive cases.

Dr. Greene noted that in the past few weeks that Emerson’s ER had seen an uptick in cases and anticipated that the trend would likely continue in that direction.

### **4. BOARD CALENDAR & MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the upcoming meeting dates for the remainder of the year – the next regularly scheduled meeting (via Zoom) will be Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting minutes for September and October will be forwarded to the Board and reviewed at the November meeting.

### **5. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

Board member Ray Considine recommended that the Board write a letter of support for legislation dubbed the SAPHE 2.0 Act (Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community) which will broaden equity and effectiveness of our local and regional public health system. This proposed legislation was drafted by Senator Comerford, Representative Kane, and Vice Chair on the Ways & Means Committee Representative Garlick (HD5306/SD3063). The SAPHE 2.0 Act will:

- Establish minimum public health standards for every community
- Increase capacity and effectiveness

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<sup>2</sup> Town of Concord Halloween Advisory

<sup>3</sup> CDC Holiday Celebrations 10/14/20

- Create a uniform data collection and reporting system
- Dedicate sustainable state funding to local boards of health and health departments

The Board reviewed a template letter that could be sent on its behalf to State Representative Tami Gouveia and Senator Michael Barrett. Mr. Considine said that local health departments in the state are already understaffed in many areas in the state and the Covid-19 pandemic certainly shone the light on the inadequacies of the local public health system in the Commonwealth.

Following a brief discussion, Ray Considine moved that the Board of Health direct the Public Health Director to draft a letter on its behalf in support of the SAPHE 2.0 Act. Mark Haddad seconded it. All VOTED in favor. Roll Call for the Vote (Block, Considine, Greene, Haddad, Healey – YES; Motion carried 5-0).

## **6. STAFF REPORTS**

### Online Permitting

The Town (Health Division) is transitioning (slowly) to online permitting for the many licenses and submittals staff receive/process. Public Health Inspector Gabrielle White has taken the lead on the project and has been working diligently with the consultant to work some of the glitches out so that a soft launch for December permit renewals can be processed in this manner. Administrative Assistant Karen Byrne has also been working through the applications and tweaking language and format for licenses. PHD Rask said that it has been a huge undertaking by the Town as a whole but because the Health Division issues such a wide range of licenses there have been some challenges but she was hopeful moving forward.

### Tobacco Control

Erin Murphy the new Tobacco Control Compliance Officer has been visiting the fourteen establishments to introduce herself and acquaint licensees with the most recent tobacco and vaping regulations. She reminded the Board that the enforcement program/inspections had been delayed due to Covid-19 demands.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted by,

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

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Dr. Deborah Greene, Chairman

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Mark Haddad, Esq.

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Jill Block

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Alma Healey, RN

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Raymond Considine