

**Winthrop Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, March 16, 2023 @6:30 pm
Harvey Hearing Room and via Zoom**

Call to order: 6:37 pm

Roll call: Bill Schmidt, Chair; Jeanne Holgersen, Vice-Chair; Marianne Dalton, Member (via Zoom).

Review of minutes, February 14, 2023: reviewed and approved unanimously 3-0.

Present: Jack Dowd, Vasili Mallios, Todd Sacco, Layne Petrie, Kurt Millar. Via Zoom: Maryellen Scandone, owner Sain Visage.

Public comment: Vasili Mallios presents a map of his property stating that he does not understand the rationale of why front yards are prohibited for placement of his chicken coop. Layne Petrie states that the setbacks are excessively restrictive. She states that her flock is certified by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, thus she is sure that her chickens do not pose a public health risk. She suggests that the Board include in the regulation that owners be required to have their flocks certified and tested by that entity (which is free of charge according to Ms Petrie). Lastly she states that the number of chickens (12) she has is over the limit (6) stated in the regulation, and wants to know what an owner can do in those circumstances.

Kurt Millar states that the testing Ms Petrie mentioned is in fact free. He states that dog waste is more toxic than chicken waste. He states that dogs pose a higher risk of infection to humans, as does food contaminated with salmonella. He also cites Revere and other towns that have lesser setback requirements than the setbacks in the proposed regulation.

Bill Schmidt reviews that the current ordinance is more restrictive than the proposed new regulation.

Mr Millar states that the regulation as proposed is discouraging chicken keeping.

He states that the public hearing on the regulation that was held on November 10, 2022 was only advertised for 1 week prior to the public hearing.

Bill clarifies that public hearings for Boards of Health are not required by law to be advertised a set number of days in advance, and are not required to be held at all. The Board chooses to hold public hearings because it is the right thing to do.

Jack Dowd asks if chicken coops are an accessory use to the main structure. He states that coops are under the purview of the Building Department. He asks how many coops are in Winthrop currently. Bill states that there are 5 as of today that the Board is aware of.

Todd Sacco states that chicken keeping is something the Board should be encouraging. He states that there is no sickness risk from chickens.

Layne Petrie states that there are 2 communities in Belgium and France that encourage households to own pairs of chickens to help dispose of kitchen scraps.

Jack Dowd states that the regulation should be reconsidered on a case-by-case basis.

Bill states that he has no personal animosity toward any party present.

Mr Sacco asks if the Board can amend the regulation, and Bill states that this is correct.

Past business:

76 Sunnyside Avenue—status: Al Legee, Commissioner of Inspectional Services is not present at tonight's meeting.

Mass DEP Waste Disposal bans, textiles, etc: nothing to report

Board of Health town website: no progress on this reported by Marianne Dalton, Member.

Board of Health workplan 2023: nothing to report

Sain Visage: Maryellen Scandone, owner of Sain Visage, states that she is unclear about what is needed for the monthly (or less frequently) botox injections at her spa in Winthrop.

Jeanne Holgersen, Vice-Chair reviews the requirements briefly, including the insurance, license, documentation, etc. Ms Scandone states that she is not sure she wants to enter the process as she perceives that the Board is causing undue barriers to providing botox in Winthrop. Jeanne and Ms Scandone will communicate after the meeting and review the requirements.

Director Of Public Health And Clinical Services update:

Meredith Hurley, Director of Public Health and Clinical Services is unable to attend tonight's meeting, but provides the following update via email:

COVID19/Influenza Activity

- *Activity has significantly decreased*
- *MA State of Emergency will expire May 11, 2023*

Vaccinations

- *Vaccine demand has significantly decreased*
- *Will be ordering additional vaccine towards end of summer as we await possible new formulary*

C.L.E.A.R. Program

- *Hosting a weekly Drop-in session on Wednesdays from 6p-8p for people seeking a safe space for substance use supports*
- *Meet monthly with health departments in Michigan and Alabama to mentor them in building an overdose prevention programs*

Other

- *Training March 30th geared towards youth mental health and local businesses who employ them*
- *Winthrop Fire will be trained in Mental Health First Aid 4/20 & 4/21*
- *Chief Delehanty, myself and Lt. Gergerian will be presenting our community trauma response at the NACCHO Prep Conference in Atlanta in April*

Commissioner Of Inspectional Services update: Al Legee not in attendance tonight.

Dumpster regulation: Bill reports having made a redraft, but wants to have Al and Sharon take a look at that before presenting it to fellow board members for comment.

Grease trap regulation: Bill reports that this is still in process

MRC update: Jeanne Maggio, Coordinator of Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) not in attendance, but Bill reports that there will be a town wide rabies clinic held sometime in April.

Keeping of animals regulation—implementation: Bill reviews the permits that are expiring next month, and as well as those that are expiring in 2024. He clarifies that the ones that will be renewed next month will need to abide by the new regulations; the ones renewed in 2024 will need to follow the new regulations at their renewal.

Marianne Dalton, Member states that there are no definitive studies that prove or disprove the presence of a health risk with backyard chickens placed in the front yard. She states that the Board needs to start somewhere, and that having an regulation in place is preferable to having no regulation in place.

Jeanne Holgersen, Vice-Chair presents her research on this issue, stating that her desire is to be fair to all parties. She reports

that she asked an expert about placement of coops in front yards vs side/backyard. The expert stated that the issue is the proximity of chickens to the public. If immunocompromised people are exposed, there is a risk. Also histoplasmosis, a fungus, is airborne, and this is a reason to not allow front yard coop placement. Histoplasmosis is a danger to immunocompromised people as well as a threat to unborn children.

After an extended discussion, it is decided that the Board will delay further action until the next meeting in April, prior to the renewal date of the 2 expiring permits. (The regulation as passed in December 2022 is effective as of April 1, 2023).

Trash, recycling and solid waste disposal regulation: Bill states that the Town Council is on the verge of voting in a new trash ordinance. Once this is completed, Bill recommends amending the Board's trash regulation to match that of the town, to eliminate any confusion.

NEMMC—2023 mosquito management plan: Marianne states the number of spraying requests residents submitted last year to Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control District last year was only six (6). Marianne recommends trying to make more public outreach to better publicize the fact that spraying requests can be filed online by residents. Both WCAT and the Transcript would be good means to educate the public. She states that the checklist NEMMC provides is very helpful. She also reports that the requests for barrier treatments, for schools and town properties, has been submitted. Once dates have been scheduled, both school officials and DPW will be notified so they can coordinate. The Board does not see any need to submit any edits to the information NEMMC is planning on posting on their website.

NSPHC environmental work group meeting, March 15: Bill reports attending this 3/15/23

North Suffolk Zero Carbon action plan Virtual Forum, March 28: Bill reports this will be an interesting Zoom meeting to attend.

Next meeting: Farmer's market and Golden Drive issue will both be discussed next month. Depending upon the severity of the Golden Drive issue, an emergency meeting may be needed to discuss action prior to the next scheduled Board meeting in April.

Adjournment: 8:30 pm, approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Dalton, Member