

TOWN OF WENHAM  
BOARD OF HEALTH  
Meeting of May 20, 2020  
Wenham Town Hall, 138 Main Street

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Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, § 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Wenham Board of Health (BOH) was held on Wednesday May 20, 2020 at 8:30AM virtually on Zoom.

- Call to order –With a quorum present, Dr. Ting called the meeting to order at 8:30AM.

Board Members Present: Dr. Andrew Ting, Chair; Regina Baker; Gerald Donnellan

Also Present: Maribeth Ting, Public Health Nurse; Greg Bernard, Health Agent; Anthony Ansaldi, Town Administrator; Jackie Bresnahan, Director of Administrative Services; Catherine Tinsley, Recording Secretary; Police Captain DiNapoli; Fire Chief Kavanagh; Chris Small, Hamilton BOH

Present not participating: Selectman Harrison; Gary Cheeseman, selectman candidate

The Chair identified that this was a virtual meeting, the meeting was being recorded, all could be heard, and votes would be taken by roll call.

- The BOH will hold a COVID-19 Public Health Forum Thursday May 21 at 3 pm on zoom and HWCAM.

- COVID-19 (Coronavirus Discussion)

- Update from Public Health Nurse – Maribeth Ting

Ms. Ting updated the board that there have been 18 residents infected with the COVID-19 virus, of those, 16 have recovered and 21 residents have quarantined at home, of those, 20 have completed their quarantine; 2 deaths have been attributed to the virus.

Monday, the governor released his reopening plan and new recommendations, terming the next phase as “safer at home”. As this suggests, people are still advised to stay home as much as possible and to continue to wear a face covering when you are outside and cannot maintain 6 feet physical distance from other people. Ms. Ting acknowledged a face covering may be more uncomfortable with the warmer weather but is an important part of preventing the virus from spreading.

Ms. Ting noted the Academic Public Health Volunteers continue to work with the Council on Aging and Wenham Connects to provide outreach to senior residents for wellness checks and to answer questions; this has been well received.

Ms. Ting recommended the board review their report for Wenham.

The Academic Public Health Volunteers continue to be a resource and can assist with e.g. policy issues, social media messaging.

- Follow up from Joint Meeting with Hamilton Board of Health

The Hamilton and Wenham Boards of Health met jointly Friday to discuss a coordinated response to opening public area’s and created a sub-committee to follow up with recommended criteria for opening, but the Governor’s plan opened public parks/ spaces Monday May 25, Memorial Day. This changes the BOH’s response.

Mr. Small reported that the Hamilton BOH met yesterday and will create a flow chart to open tennis courts, basketball courts and playground equipment. The Hamilton BOH will use the beach guidance from the Governor to maintain 12 feet physical distance for Patton Park; face coverings are required outside when a physical distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained. This is in accordance with the Governor’s executive order.

A discussion followed to communicate to residents the governor’s phase 1 plan to reopen and how-to safety use public spaces again and avoid a resurgence of the virus and another stay at home order. Captain DiNapoli observed that Wenham set up a police patrol at Rail Trail to provide COVID-19 literature to the public. Over 1000 people were estimated to have received information.

Captain DiNapoli spoke on the importance the police department had a clear understanding of what is open to the public to avoid citing people.

The board spoke about their concern that the public opening on May 25 would extend beyond the governor’s order.

Because the Rail Trail is through traffic from town to town, Ms. Ting suggested promoting other locations as options to visit less travelled trails, avoid using trails at peak times and keep face covering with you at all times ( if needed.)

The BOH requested the Department of Public Works submit a protocol for cleaning / disinfecting the bathrooms in preparation for opening.

Ms. Baker questioned the use of Environmental Police as a resource. Captain DiNapoli will reach out to this organization and see where they are providing a presence.

Regarding the trails controlled by Wenham Canal, Mass Audubon, and Gordon College, it was noted that these entities have been following the town's lead and will be updated on the board's decision to open public trails.

Ms. Bresnahan will follow up with Wenham Village Society as the owners of the tennis courts.

It was agreed to not open Pleasant Pond or the parking lot at this time.

The board asked that the town use the so-called reverse 911 / robocall to updated residents on what is open. There was also a discussion to do a mailing, post a notice on the HWCAM, meet jointly with Hamilton BOH.

Mr. Small left the meeting at 9:20am.

- o Update from the Board of Health

At their meeting last night, the board of selectmen requested detailed decisions from BOH.

The board supported the following:

- o Trash - carry in / carry out
- o Bring your own hand sanitizer
- o Maintain 12 feet physical distancing in parks
- o No contact sports
- o Bathroom facilities remain closed
- o Basketball and tennis courts remain closed
- o Playgrounds remain closed
- o Parking/ Pleasant Pond Beach remain closed
- o Parking open at Rail Trail but no parking along Route 97
- o Remain with your own household in these shared spaces
- o In accordance with the Governor's order #31 - Bring / use face covering in shared outdoor spaces if you can't remain six feet apart.

A reminder that all residents are safer at home and should stay at home as much as possible unless out for groceries, medications, urgent medical appoint or visiting a house of worship.

This guidance and health safety guidance on hand and outdoor spaces hygiene as well as mental health resources will be shared on social media the website the public forum and by robocall.

Although opening Town hall is not being considered, the BOH and Public Nurse will begin to draft a planning process and protocol.

*VOTE: The board voted unanimously by roll call vote to amend the current closure of outdoor spaces in the Town of Wenham to allow for the opening of trails, athletic fields, and parks, excluding the use of playground equipment, starting on May 25, 2020 and following the DPH guidelines.*

- Staff Updates
  - o Mr. Bernard reported that he continues with inspections and reviewing plans. The volume of applications is down compared to last year, in particular, a couple sub divisions were actively installing last year which have been completed.
  - o Ms. Cody will meet with Gordon College over the summer to stay up to date on safety guidelines and emergency plans for next year.
  - o Ms. Cody continues to work with food service establishments and inspections.
  - o Mosquito control will be on an upcoming agenda.
- The BOH will meet May 27.
- Adjourn – *The board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn 9:46am.*

Respectfully Submitted by  
Catherine Tinsley  
5.24.2020