

City of Chelsea

Board of Health Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2018
5:15 PM – Public Library

Attendance: Christopher Miller (Chair), Catherine Maas, Dean Xerras and Madeleine Scammell. Luis Prado (Agent/HHS), Paula McHatton (public health nurse/HHS),

Dr. Catie Brown, Mass DPH; Jessica Kahlenberg, Innovation and Strategy Advisor to the City Manager, City of Chelsea; Rodson Celestin, high school intern in the City Manager's office; Mimi Graney, Downtown Coordinator, City of Chelsea.

Meeting called to order by C. Miller at 5:15pm

Public Comments: none.

Rats and Animal Control Issues: Paula invited Dr. Brown here because of the leptospirosis case we had in the city and larger rodent control concerns. She acknowledged that rodent problems are increasing across the state, not just in urban areas. That being said, it is nearly impossible to connect a particular disease event with a rodent population. There is not a good way to assess the burden of disease as a consequence of these rodent infestations. Lepto may be the one exception. This bacteria is carried in the urine of rodents and dogs (and is fairly common in canines.) Common among travelers. In the last 6 mo of 2017 the State of MA had two cases of locally acquired lepto, one in Chelsea. Two cases is noteworthy when we have never seen it in the past. Likely the result of increasing rodent populations. Clear rodent exposure in each situation contributes to likelihood. Suggests the rodent problem is more urgent. Dr. Brown interested in learning more about what we are doing to address rodents in the city. The largest concern is related to water, standing water that is a reservoir for rodent urine as well. New York City also seeing an increase in locally acquired lepto, but it isn't rampant.

City has hired another inspector to work on seeclickfix, food inspection and private property abatement. The city also offers baiting on private property.

Mimi asked if there is a PSA that anyone knows of, or if Mass DPH can create one, so each community could adapt it for CCTV or radio, in English and Spanish. Dr. Brown will call NYC and see if they have anything along these lines.

The board had a conversation about animal waste, and dog owners in particular who do not pick up their dog waste. Catching a dog owner in the act of ignoring their dog's feces is a real challenge. Opinion by some board members that there are not sufficient numbers of trash cans in areas where dog owners would walk, so less incentive to collect the dog poop to throw it out. Luis will invite the City dog officer to our next mtg.

FDA food initiative standard project: Mimi talked about the new, multi-year voluntary food standards grant. The initial focus this year is Standard 1. Things on the BOH "to do list": review

the work plan, a self-assessment to meet the regulatory standards (we are working on 1990 standards in Chelsea now- there have been ~4 amendments since then) then to compare with current FDA standards, document procedures to put us in compliance. NACCHO (National Association of County and City Health Officers) has matched us/Chelsea with Pontiac, Michigan for mentoring. On May 15/16, Mimi and the new health inspector will go meet with them, to get a day of education on how they do their own food safety inspections. New food inspector has been in ISD but is now in a new role. Among her new responsibilities: retail food establishments, dumpsters, and seeclickfix controller. She is a bilingual Chelsea resident. One of the FDA retail standards is both the regulatory framework, uniform procedures for inspections, and staff trainings. Mimi is working with the City Manager and ISD to train the new inspector and get her up-to-speed. Record keeping is limited in the city (no records of what violations were, only that there were violations). All inspections will be documented in the future. Part of new FDA standards include transparency in terms of grades. E.g., go to the City of Boston website to learn if a food establishment doesn't have an A, a consumer can look up exactly what the violations were that brought the grade down. A board member could go, full day Thursday/half day Friday, March 15/16. Pontiac is mentoring more than one city, and the other city has 5 people going. Chris would like to go. Cate will think about it too.

Opengov portal... City is trying to make more of the city documents on-line.

Public Health Nurse Report: Paula presented on Dec/Jan and Jan/Feb disease outbreaks. Still seeing an uptick in Mumps. 62 for this year (since last Feb). Widespread flu activity in the northeast, including Chelsea. Four probable Hep C cases in Jan, and a meningitis in Dec. Brief discussion re. street clinics and navigator programs for substance users which are harder to run effectively in the winter months.

Boston Hides and Furs: Luis sent a notice in January to B&H requesting an abatement plan within 30 days for repeated problems related to one of their ramps, and water problems. It has not yet been 30 days. Luis would like the city engineer to come and explain the problem to the board and if/why he agrees with the abatement plan proposed by the company. If they don't respond, the Board can fine them and agreed we should.

Minutes: December minutes approved.

Next mtgs: March 6, and April 3, 5:15 PM Chris will confirm.

Respectfully submitted,
Madeleine Scammell