

Meeting Minutes of the Chelsea Board of Health
December 14, 2021

Attendance: Names of members and Participants

Board members, City of Chelsea staff and guests were introduced.

Board Members:

- Ola Bayode
- Corinna Culler
- Allen Jackson
- Joshua Merson

City of Chelsea Staff:

- Dr. Flor Amaya, Director of Public Health
- Paula McHatton, Public Health Nurse
- Mark Rossi, Assistant City Solicitor

Guests:

- Chris Alonso, La Colaborativa
- James Callahan, Member of the public
- Jack (no last name given, did not respond to request to introduce themselves)
- Dan Cortez, Community Engagement Specialist, Chelsea Police Dept.
- Karthik Dinakar, The Chelsea Project
- Barry Keppard, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Ann Kissel, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Adoption of the Minutes of the October and November Meetings

A motion to adopt the minutes from the October and November meeting was unanimously approved.

After a brief discussion clarifying when the board would rescind the mask mandate, it was clarified that the Board would consider rescinding the mandate when cases were less than 35 per week for 4 weeks. With that change, the minutes of the –November 30 emergency meeting were approved.

Public Comments – Resident Communication re: Mask Mandate

James Callahan spoke out against the recently instituted mask mandate, referencing a hard drive containing videos and documents he felt were important for the Board to consider. The City is in receipt of the hard drive, and its contents will be forwarded to members of the Board.

Adopting BoH Order to effectuate updated Tobacco Regulation

Dr. Amaya reminded the Board that before the new tobacco regulations can go into effect, the Board must formally adopt the regulations.

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A motion to adopt the updated tobacco regulations was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Wastewater Monitoring Updates

Barry Keppard updated the Board about recent trends observed in the wastewater monitoring sites in Chelsea.

Keppard noted that the wastewater monitoring data is updated weekly on the Chelsea Project's website. He noted that increases in COVID seen in wastewater have corresponded to rises in weekly COVID cases in the city. For example, this was true in the November 2020 winter surge, and the recent surge in cases in October 2021. COVID detection levels are beginning to rise to rates comparable to monitoring results seen last winter, he noted.

BioBot, the organization that does testing for the MAPC, also has a map on their website showing the results of wastewater monitoring across the country, he noted.

Corinna Culler asked what the time lag was between spikes observed in the wastewater and an increase in COVID cases. Keppard responded that it depends on variations in testing. He noted that it helpful to think of this relationship in terms of magnitude – that wastewater monitoring results were high when cases were high, and the reverse is also true.

Josh Merson asked about the testing frequency for wastewater monitoring. Keppard responded that wastewater is now being tested at the two Chelsea sewer sheds weekly.

Ola Bayode asked what other variables the Board should be aware of to help track COVID spread in the city. Keppard responded that wastewater is the best available indicator for now. Karthik Dinakar added that looking at folks with 2 doses of the vaccine, or with one previous infection could be useful in some cases. He continued that wastewater monitoring would probably be the best indicator of COVID transmission in Chelsea right now.

Updates – Covid 19 cases, other infectious diseases, vaccination efforts, etc.

Paula McHatton, Public Health Nurse reported:

- There were 4 enteric diseases reported last month, all cases of giardia in recent arrivals from Guatemala.
- There was a suspected cases of mumps in a 5-year-old.
- The active TB case she had been following has completed 6 months of treatment and is no longer being followed.
- There were 46 cases of the flu A strain.

COVID-19

- 10,030 cases of COVID-19 have been reported in total in Chelsea, and 77 new cases since last Friday. There were 149 new cases reported the first week of December, the previous week there were 121 cases reported.

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- The positivity rate was 3.96% last week, up from 3.28% the previous week.
- The incidence rate was 37/100,000 last week, up from 25/100,000 the previous week.
- As of November 30, the contract tracers have ceased following up with confirmed cases. Follow-up is now the responsibility of local health departments. Cambridge has been assisting the City by sending text messages to confirmed cases among Chelsea residents in English and Spanish with necessary follow-up information.

Dr. Flor Amaya reported that:

- As of December 7, Chelsea's vaccination rate was 83.9%. The pediatric vaccination rate was 21.7% (children who received 1 dose). The City administered approximately 51 first doses and 150 second doses at a recent school-based vaccination clinic.
- La Collaborativa's weekly vaccination clinics ended today but will resume in 2022.
- The Chelsea Senior Center will be closed on Fridays going forward.
- Stop the Spread has been extended through March 2022.
- The City received 15,000 rapid tests that will be distributed to residents through community-based organizations.

Corinna Culler asked how the rapid tests being distributed to community members were intended to be used. Dr. Amaya responded that communication would focus on encouraging testing before gathering with friends and family. Dr. Amaya noted that the tests received would not be enough to supply all city residents with a test, adding that there might be an opportunity for residents to buy tests at a reduced cost, but this one distribution is all that she expects.

Josh Merson asked whether the 83.9% vaccination rate was for the entire population of the city or for those eligible for the vaccine. Dr. Amaya clarified that the vaccination rate was for the entire eligible population, including youth ages 5 and up.

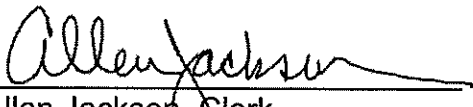
New Business or Items for Discussion

There were no new items presented for discussion.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held January 11.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32pm.


 Allen Jackson, Clerk

1/18/2022
 Date

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