

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON PUBLIC HEALTH MINUTES
TUESDAY, January 28, 2016

Members present: Dr. Schlaff, Ms. Lefman, Dr. Narain, Ms. Maher and Ms. Stoddard

Staff present: Dr. Balsam, Ms. Minott, Ms. Miller, Mr. Maloney, Ms. Westley, and Ms. Snyder

Dr. Schlaff convened the meeting at 6:15. New members Nalina Narain and Gretchen Stoddard were welcomed. All members and staff present took a few moments to introduce themselves and describe their responsibilities (staff) and backgrounds/interests (members).

Ms. Minott introduced a group of seven peer leaders who presented a draft of their proposed warrant article. The goal of the article, to be presented at the November Town Meeting, would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products at Brookline stores and regulate the sale of cigars by price and number.

Following a well-executed PowerPoint presentation, the peer leaders fielded a number of questions and suggestions by staff and members. They agreed to incorporate these ideas into the proposed warrant article, and we expect to see them in the fall when the Council holds a public hearing on their article

Taking advantage of the fact that most division directors were present, Dr. Schlaff called on each to present on the mission of their divisions: Ms. Minott outlined her work with four staffers in the division of substance abuse and violence prevention for youth. She mentioned the work of the Brookline Parent Education Network (B-PEN) and the Brookline Coalition Against Substance Abuse (B-CASA). The peer leadership program currently includes 45 students, and all their work is informed by the ongoing Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (Volume 17 of Healthy Brookline is due out shortly).

Barbara Westley described her responsibilities in preventing and controlling communicable diseases in Brookline. She also described her work with other divisions around animal control, including bat exposures and other animal to human contacts and also how quarantines are handled.

Cheryl Snyder, recently replacing Dawn Sibor, described the mission of the Emergency Preparedness group: Representing the department at Regional Coalitions and our own Emergency Management Team, overseeing the Medical Reserve Corps, and launching the Emergency Preparedness Buddies program.

Pat Maloney described the work of the Environmental Health division. Food (300+), housing, tanning, camps, swimming pools, and tobacco permits are all overseen by Mr. Maloney and his staff of four full-time and two part-time inspectors (includes Weights and Measures). Housing complaints are a large segment of their work, but construction issues (lead paints, etc.) and other environmental concerns are a major focus.

Dr. Schlaff thanked all the division directors for their time and presentations, and their hard work.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Balsam reported that the Medical Marijuana dispensary is set to launch in the next two weeks following numerous inspections. The warrant for Town Meeting opens in two weeks and we are concerned about articles to ban the sale of tobacco, ban football, and ban wood fireplaces – more at our next meeting.

Dr. Rudisch's husband, Marvin Minsky, died a few days ago, and several members will follow up with condolences. A variety of activities is planned for Public Health Week in April; complete list to follow.

The date of the 20th Annual Public Health Policy Forum is Wednesday, June 22nd. The working title is: "20 Years of Advocating for Health Care Forum: Looking Back, Looking Forward". Governor Dukakis will moderate.

Dr. Schlaff proposed putting off the discussion of pairing members with division directors, but asked that members with preferences should let him know. The next meeting is set for Thursday, February 25th.

A general discussion of the challenges facing Brookline due to charges of racism ensued. All departments and divisions need to look at what they are doing to combat racism and increase diversity. This is a theme that will be discussed throughout the year.

There being no further business, Dr. Schlaff adjourned the meeting at 7:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Balsam, Ph.D., MPH
Director
Public Health and Human Services