

Advisory Council on Public Health | Meeting Minutes

Location:	Hybrid Denny Room, 11 Pierce Street and Virtual ACPH – February 15 Meeting Related Files
Date:	Wednesday, February 15, 2023
Time:	5:30 – 7:00 PM
Attendees:	Natalia Linos, MSc, ScD, Chair (virtual) Andy Epstein, RN, MPH Charles Homer, MD Leonard Jokubaitis, MD, MPH Rosemarie Roque Gordon, MD, MPH
Absent:	Peter Moyer, MD, MPH, Affiliate Member James Perrin, MD
Attending staff:	Sigalle Reiss, MPH, RS/REHS, Director of Public Health & Human Services John Kleschinsky, DrPH, Asst Director, Programming & Policy (virtual) Roland Lankah (virtual) Elizabeth Bennett Wendy Machmuller

A meeting of the Advisory Council of Public Health (ACPH) was held virtually and in person at the Health Building Denny Room on February 15, 2023. Dr. Charles Homer called the meeting to order and presided over it. Dr. Peter Moyer and Dr. James Perrin were absent.

Agenda Items

Announcements

There were no announcements

Public Comment

There was no public comment

Approval of minutes

No minutes approved.

Presentation: BioTech Project Launch

Paul Saner and Marilyn Newman introduced themselves as members of Brookline's Lab and Bioscience Subcommittee of the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB)

Mr. Saner and Ms. Newman shared a slide presentation with the following information: To set the context, a high-level view of potential bio tech in Brookline was presented. Bio Safety Lab (BSL) levels 1 and 2 only are being considered in Brookline; EDAB sees no need for Brookline to accommodate a level 3 lab. The Economic Development Planning Department is gearing up to study the far end of Rt 9 – the Chestnut Hill area – for future siting of lab space.

Objectives for the development of town-level public health regulations were presented. It was noted that BSL's are heavily regulated by the state, but local oversight allows the town to enforce state and fed laws, and to determine how they are implemented at the local level. Local regulatory frameworks bring a level of assurance to community members and allows transparency. EDAB would be pleased to be a resource and to assist with this process. Saner stated other benefits if Brookline were to accommodate lab space, in addition to the already recognized tax base. It was noted that had a lab been sited at 10 Brookline Place (10BP), the tax base would have been equal to or more than the amount of the projected override. A lab here would have benefited local businesses, but the 10BP project has been put on an indefinite hold.

Questions and Discussion:

Dr. Jokubaitis asked about the diagnostic capabilities of BSL level 1 and 2 labs and whether or not we would be hindered by current regulations; Rebecca Caruso stated that BSL 1 or 2 are generally for diagnostic labs. Saner stated that EDAB may do an inventory of level 1 labs currently in Brookline.

Dr. Linos asked if we are envisioning that labs will operate under a university agreement; she also wanted to know about the potential impacts on housing [prices and availability]. Saner responded that if we increase the [commercial] tax base, that in turn that could reduce the tax burden on current property owners.

In closing, Saner noted employment opportunities; he acknowledged he did not have an answer to whether or not labs in Brookline would operate under a university; he noted that there even could be some small startup labs financed by private equity firms, and that our local regulations should accommodate all types of lab holdings. 2 Brookline Place (Boston Children's Hospital) has a tax certainty agreement in perpetuity. Establishing the Public Health regulations sooner than later will help move lab initiatives forward.

Commissioner Reiss introduced Rebecca Caruso, the Consultant BioSafety/rDNA Regulations. Ms. Caruso stated that her slide presentation would focus on the process to create public health regulatory framework. Key factors in this framework will be

stakeholder engagement, community engagement, and a transparent process. To create the regulations would likely require hiring consultant and or restructuring health budget.

Discussion:

Dr. Homer asked if inspectional programs are federally [mandated]; Ms. Caruso said there are all different types of inspectional programs. Ms. Epstein asked if there are lessons learned from the BU lab incident that we could review.

Commissioner Reiss asked if Ms. Caruso could describe what we are looking to regulate, and she responded that it would be recombinant rDNA labs. Dr. Homer asked if these are the types of labs that EDAB is seeking to have developed.

Commissioner Reiss asked Ms. Caruso to talk more about the community engagement process. Lastly noted is that the timing of forming the bio-safety committee is that it may not be needed until there is a proposal for a lab.

Board Development

Ralph Fuccillo thanked ACPH members for the interviews over two weeks.

Mr. Fuccillo then shared a slide presentation with the following information and discussion:

Focus Areas slide: This provided a summary of two key objectives, including getting to know one another better, and gaining a greater understanding of the structure, budget, and programs of the current BDPH and some of the potential objectives of an evolving HHS department

Reflections slide: This provided a summary of collective thoughts stemming from the interviews. Overarching themes included the acknowledgement of the intersectionality of issues, such as housing, public safety, poverty and thus the appreciating the broader sense of public health.

Considerations slide: This provided a summary of considerations that might help to inform future work, such as the relationships and influence with Brookline stakeholders to optimize health outcomes, the value of prevention for public health outcomes and if programs are appropriately situated to achieve this, and identifying priorities amidst a crowded set of community needs.

Mr. Fuccillo suggested that the items on the Considerations page could serve as a future agenda for discussions on areas of development

Andy requested an explanation of the acronym SDOH (Social Determinants of Health).

Relationships slide: This provided some key insights into the dynamic between BDPH staff and ACPH members.

Following this slide there was a pause for discussion.

Consensus that Mr. Fuccillo's reflections are on point. Dr. Linos regrets that they don't all get more time together and that often they are rushing through the agenda. Commissioner Reiss stated that even the process of the interviews was valuable in understanding where people are coming from.

Retreat Considerations slide: This provided bullet points of objectives for a retreat.

Discussions slide: This provided a list of four questions to help facilitate discussion.

Following this slide there was a pause for discussion.

Dr. Homer suggested that there are some "deep themes" which could be addressed, such as the tensions between what the Health Department must do (e.g. vaccine clinics) vs what broader issues it could address and explore. Mr. Fuccillo suggested that from the interviews he sees this [type of discussion] as the big take away opportunity as issues are big and complex. Dr. Homer said that mental health is another really big topic that we might want to delve into in future discussions.

Commissioner Reiss stated that she is interested in exploring further the State level "front door policies and programs" roadmap. She suggests inviting the public to some of these discussions. Dr. Homer was excited about potentially elevating the exposure of the health department. Ms. Epstein said that not having TAB has been challenging for outreach and communication.

ACPH Development slide: Mr. Fuccillo put this slide up for review and further discussion.

Dr. Linos asked how the ACPH might quickly tap into expertise when needed, e.g. when the issues such as artificial turf arise. She suggested that MSW (Master of Social Work) students be invited as placements within the health department. Commissioner Reiss asked how the ACPH might tap into the wealth of knowledge in our community.

Discussion slide: Mr. Fuccillo put this slide back up again.

Some final discussion and closing remarks were shared. Commissioner Reiss acknowledged that the process [of conducting interviews] was valuable. Mr. Fuccillo asked when should the group get started [on the retreat]. Dr. Roque Gordon said that team building should start sooner than later. It was asked whether or not the retreat would include HD staff, and Commissioner Reiss was not sure. Mr. Fuccillo recommended 3-4 hours to dedicate to this time, possibly noon to 4:30 possible. Consensus is that this timeframe would work for everyone; Mr. Fuccillo and Commissioner Reiss would together determine a date for the retreat.

Director/Division Reports

Commissioner Reiss announced National Public Health Week as April 2-9, an Open House at the health building on April 3 and the Mother's Out Front PFAS webinar on April 9.

Other business and Discussion

No other business.

Adjournment

Dr. Homer motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Jokubaitis. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Action Items

Action Item	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
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