

Advisory Board of Health Meeting Minutes

A special meeting of the Advisory Board of Health (ABH) was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, in room B3 of Town Hall.

Members present: Kevin Cunningham, Chair; Jose Cara, Vice Chair; and Mary Guimond, Clerk
Guests: David Knauf, Darien Director of Public Health
Members of the Public: Susan Warner and Dorothy Turnbull, representing Post 53; and Walter Casey

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair Cunningham. First on the agenda were the topics of Mr. Knauf. With regard to posting of restaurant inspections, Mr. Knauf stated that Ed Schmidt, Town Counsel, had advised that no ordinance was required to begin posting. Mr. Knauf suggested using Farmington Valley Health Department posting program as a model for Darien, which will be sent to the CT State Health Department to ensure consistency with State code. Mr. Knauf will review the program with, and solicit input from, Karl Kilduff, the Board of Selectmen, and the Public Health and Safety committee of the RTM. Dr. Cara asked how the public would be apprised. Mr. Knauf responded that newspaper coverage of the program along with access to the program on the Town's website should ensure awareness. Program implementation will likely take a year to allow for restaurant notification and the rebuilding of the Town's website. Mr. Knauf asked for and received ABH support of this program at the March 23, 2009, Board of Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Knauf related that the Selectmen approved the Health Department budget, including money allocated for badly needed software. Mr. Knauf asked ABH to write a letter to the Board of Finance in support of the software. Chair Cunningham agreed to write a draft and distribute to ABH members. Mr. Knauf also reported that the Health Department is now, for the first time, connected to the Town's intranet, called City View, allowing for better communication among departments.

Mr. Knauf attended a Hands for Life community meeting in Darien in February which included a presentation by Dr. Thomas Nero of Stamford Hospital. Mr. Knauf and ABH members agreed that until there is agreement that Good Samaritan laws extend to the hands-only CPR training, ABH and Darien Health Department would advocate Red Cross and American Heart certifications only. It was agreed that Darien should continue toward achieving Heart Safe Community status.

Mr. Knauf advised that the State will revise shellfishing classifications in selected areas of Darien to private only, disallowing commercial shellfishing. The State has identified 52 properties that need to have septic system inspections. Previous attempts to encourage such inspections by Darien have not been successful so Mr. Knauf suggested we try an approach used by Fairfield. This approach allowed homeowners to have independent septic companies provide the inspection instead of a governmental agency. If the

inspections uncover abnormalities, the homeowners are required to have them fixed. ABH members supported this approach.

Mr. Knauf is prepared to hire a nurse, who will work one day per week but with maximum flexibility in that schedule. Mr. Knauf reported that the sharing of one headcount with another department was discouraged by Karl Kilduff.

Mr. Knauf mentioned that he received two calls regarding a cancer cluster in Town. He sent information to the State tumor registry, which reported no findings for such a cluster. Mr. Knauf sent the information to the callers and offered to have Dr. Caleb Moore meet with the neighborhood. Dr. Cara asked that Mr. Knauf ask the State for additional clarification, which Mr. Knauf agreed to do.

Mr. Knauf is prepared to submit the Board of Selectmen a streamlined fee schedule that adheres to existing State and Town ordinances.

Mr. Knauf asked for the support of ABH members regarding a change in Darien's lead enforcement regulations that require property owners engage lead consultants for the investigation of elevated lead levels rather than require the Town to provide such an investigation. Mr. Knauf anticipates an increase in lead investigations due to the State lowering the approved lead levels in children. Such investigations are time consuming for towns to provide and the experience of consultants is greater than what exists in most towns. Dr. Cara expressed concern that property owners may not act quickly enough to ensure the safety of the children involved. Mr. Knauf assured Dr. Cara that the Darien Health Department would be involved in overseeing every step of the process. After much discussion, ABH agreed to support Mr. Knauf in this change provided that after no more than six months, Mr. Knauf will report to ABH how this regulation change is working.

Mr. Knauf identified discrepancies in Town ordinances with regard to shellfishing in terminology, in departmental responsibility and permitting. He will do more research in this area and advise ABH.

Mr. Knauf mentioned that the Town will engage in disaster planning the last week of May which will involve a drill (tabletop) associated with the schools. Next week, Mr. Knauf, in conjunction with Marc McEwan, Emergency Operations Manager, Ann Fountain and Norwalk Hospital will conduct an examination of local facilities for use in distributing mass vaccines if that ever becomes necessary.

Mr. Knauf asked for and received the support of ABH members in pursuing a smoking ban at the public beaches, in conjunction with the Heart Safe Community initiative. In addition, ABH supports the Lyme disease prevention program identified by Mr. Knauf. This was the conclusion of Mr. Knauf's agenda items and Mr. Knauf excused himself from the remainder of the meeting.

Chair Cunningham reviewed the presentation ABH has prepared to present to the Board of Selectmen with regard to paramedic services in Town. There were comments from members of the public, which were acknowledged by ABH members.

Chair Cunningham agreed to contact the First Selectwoman to ask where the Selectmen stand on filling the two vacancies on ABH.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Guimond, Clerk