

RTM Public Health and Safety Committee
February 26, 2018
Darien Town Hall Room 213

MINUTES

Committee Members in Attendance: Colin Kelly, Linda Terhune, Jennifer Woodbury, Laura Mosher, Sara Parent, Mac Patrick, Susannah Lewis, Gary Swenson

Committee Members Absent: Lois Schneider, Nina Miller, Holly Giordano, Brian Rayhill, Mia Handler

PH&S Chair Mac Patrick called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The committee unanimously approved the 1/22/18 meeting minutes.

Mr. Patrick introduced Linda Terhune, a new PH&S committee member from RTM District IV.

Town of Darien's Director of Health, David Knauf, joined the PH&S Committee to discuss public health and safety related topics for the Town of Darien.

Mr. Knauf reported that the demand for the flu shot has been declining over recent years (most likely due to easy availability at drug stores, etc.). This year was different because of the flu fatality in New Canaan, so demand was higher than anticipated.

Committee member L. Mosher asked how the town tracks the number of residents who contract the flu. Laboratory confirmed results are the only data required to be reported to the town, and therefore the reported numbers are not an accurate reflection of the actual number of influenza cases in town.

Mr. Knauf discussed the food protection program and restaurant food inspections. He stated that restaurants should be displaying their ratings, although enforcement can be difficult. Information is available online however. Facilities should be inspected four times a year - frequency is important. The town offers bi-monthly training programs as well as multi-lingual online training.

Mr. Knauf discussed mosquitoes and ticks. The Health Department accepts ticks from residents and submits them to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for testing. The percentage of ticks that tested positive for Lyme was higher this year than in past years, consistent with other neighboring towns. Mosquitoes test positive for West Nile Virus every year, but no cases have been reported in town.

Mr. Knauf discussed beach water quality. Every week between Memorial Day and Labor Day, Weed and Pear Tree Point beaches are tested for bacteria. If more than an inch of rain occurs in a 24-hour period, beaches will close for two tide cycles. Every time it rains, bacteria counts are high (consistent with other municipalities). Darien, in conjunction

with other towns, applied for and received a grant to do a DNA tracking study to try to determine the source of the bacteria after rainfall. Results show that the bacteria is not human, but exact source of bacteria was not able to be determined.

Committee member L. Mosher asked if the town tests city water. Mr. Knauf informed the committee that the town has no regulatory authority over public water systems; that's the responsibility of the State Health Department. Aquarion and the State Health Department are in touch with Darien about any water quality issues however.

Mr. Knauf discussed the prescription drug drop off program. Darien began participating in the unwanted drug disposal program in 2010 and installed the 24/7-collection box in the Police Department lobby in 2012. In June of 2016, the 2,000-pound mark for disposed medication was reached in Darien. The town currently collects and disposes of approximately 50 pounds of unwanted medications each month.

Committee member S. Lewis described her work on the opioid project in town trying to get an understanding of data and trends about what types of prescriptions are being filled in Darien.

Mr. Knauf stated that the town also has an agreement with first responders that the town will be notified of any overdoses or Narcan administrations. Last year, there were no reported Narcan administrations. He stated that the directors of health have also been advocating for a reporting system for overdoses in Connecticut.

Committee member G. Swenson asked Mr. Knauf if there's anything that he'd like to see changed to make his job easier or more effective. Mr. Knauf responded that he would really like to see the state pay more attention to local issues, and to be able to have more of a dialogue with state policymakers.

Mac Patrick adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Woodbury