

**Board of Health
Tuesday, August 2, 2022
Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Members Attending: J. Dethoff, B. Hospidor, K. Schorn, J. Schwartz

Others Attending: S. Smith, C. Reed, E. Blankenbiller, L. Camp, J. Melendez, C. Kammerer

Dr. Dethoff called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. He stated that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Ms. Schorn, seconded by Mr. Hospidor, to approve the June 7, 2022 meeting summary as written. Motion carried unanimously.

HEALTH INSPECTION REPORT

Mr. Reed provided the monthly report via email before the start of the meeting:

Inspections June & July

- Inspections – 108
- Rechecks - 19
- Food related complaint investigations – 17
- Building & Trades walk-thru – 16
- SR requests as they relate to health – 21
- Animal control inspections – 30

Mr. Lachat connected to the meeting at this time.

COVID-19 UPDATE

EMS Deputy Chief Sninsky shared the following via email with his apologies for being unable to attend this meeting:

- Approximately 5 cases of COVID in the Fire Department, all minor symptoms and all have recovered
- Fire and EMS still have plenty of PPE for this and other issues
- No Monkeypox as of yet (hopefully not) - body substance isolation/ “universal precautions” observed should help mitigate the issue
- A “Stop the Bleed” class was offered to both high schools in the City for their teachers and staff, Berks Catholic accepted and their class is end of August

Dr. Dethoff questioned what “Stop the Bleed” classes are. Ms. Camp stated that they teach basic first aid and CPR.

BERNHART'S DAM

Dr. Dethoff requested an update on Bernhart's Dam. Ms. Smith explained that the City must decide whether it will remove the current dam and rebuild it to current standards or remove the current dam and let the creek go back to its natural course and improve the park.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if additional lead remediation is needed and whether this will be overseen by EPA. Ms. Smith stated that past testing did not show high lead levels in the lake bed. She stated that the areas with high lead levels that have not been remediated are the now former islands since there is access to the areas with the lake drained and along the steep wooded slope. She questioned if Mr. Lachat had any additional information. Mr. Lachat stated that he had no new information but suggested that additional remediation may be needed in the future.

EVICTIION MORATORIUM

Dr. Dethoff stated that the moratorium has ended.

COUNTY DEPT OF HEALTH

No report.

POSITION STATEMENT ON ADDING MOLD REGULATIONS TO THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE

Ms. Smith explained that the mold issue was brought to City Council several weeks ago by residents of a specific property who claim to have developed health issues due to the mold in the property. She stated that Council referred the issue to the Board of Health for a position statement.

Dr. Dethoff stated that he has done some preliminary research and neither EPA nor DEP have set clear guidelines on mold.

Mr. Melendez stated that he has also researched the issue. He agreed that there are no clear guidelines set by EPA or DEP and that no other 3rd class city in PA has regulations regarding mold. He stated that the removal of moisture addressed in other parts of the Property Maintenance Code should address mold issues. He expressed the belief that there is no benefit to adding mold to the Property Maintenance Code.

Dr. Dethoff noted the difficulty measuring mold. He stated that he would be glad to draft a position statement. He stated that there is no specific threshold for dangers from mold and each person's reaction is different. He expressed the belief that many people overreact to mold. He noted the need to clean the area and ensure that there is no moisture to allow the mold to regrow.

Mr. Melendez agreed and stated that monitoring and regulating mold would be difficult for inspectors.

Mr. Blankenbiller stated that most mold complaints are due to uncleanliness and moisture issues.

Dr. Dethoff stated that mold is visible and can easily be cleaned. He suggested that Dr. Schwartz speak with a Pulmonologist to see if there is any other information to be considered.

Dr. Swartz stated that she will speak with a Pulmonologist for their opinion. She stated that there is no testing for mold in general. She agreed that the best way to deal with mold is to ensure there is

no moisture in the area. She suggested that mold not be added to the Property Maintenance Code if there is no way to properly measure it.

Ms. Smith questioned if a written statement from the Board would assist Mr. Melendez as the City continues to explore this issue. Mr. Melendez stated that a written statement would be helpful.

Dr. Dethoff stated that he will draft a statement.

HEALTH SURVEY

Ms. Kammerer and Ms. Camp introduced themselves and provided brief backgrounds.

Ms. Kammerer stated that the goal of the survey is to educate residents about COVID and to ensure that information about COVID is provided in a cultural and linguistically appropriate way. She noted the need to meet people at their level.

Mr. Melendez disconnected from the meeting at this time.

Ms. Kammerer stated that Latino Connection is a partner in the project and is conducting face-to-face interviews about COVID, getting the vaccine, and vaccine hesitancy.

Ms. Camp stated that the \$3.9 million grant was awarded through the Office of Minority Health. She stated that the grant is part of the COVID relief funding but that there are implications beyond COVID. She stated that Reading is building the capability to expand health services.

Ms. Camp stated that three surveys are planned as part of this project:

- Survey #1 is complete and was a short health literacy survey to illustrate current basic understanding. She stated that there were 650 responses and the data is currently being compiled.
- Survey #2 is COVID specific and will investigate vaccine hesitancy or motivation
- Survey #3 is a comprehensive health survey and will address health literacy and how people use the information they have to change their health

Ms. Camp stated that health related materials will be assessed to determine if they are culturally appropriate to ensure that residents get accurate information and understand it. She stated that health literacy is important and noted the need for policies and positive patient experiences. She expressed the belief that health providers can also be awarded funding to better serve Reading's residents.

Ms. Camp noted the need for assistance in finding additional partners as she has experienced hesitancy to work with the City. She noted the need for large and small organizations.

Dr. Dethoff questioned if health information could expand beyond COVID and include smoking, obesity, etc. Ms. Camp stated that only one survey is specific to COVID. She stated that the other surveys may contain these issues. She noted the need for residents to have access to care, someone to attend appointments with them, etc.

Dr. Dethoff suggested contacting the Berks County Medical Society as a possible partner. He stated that the Medical Society conducted health surveys in the past and some of the current survey information may dovetail with their survey.

Ms. Schorn suggested that the surveys be given to neighborhood groups. Ms. Camp agreed that this could be done. She requested that the Board of Health members use their network to find additional partners. She stated that the second survey will be available online and that she would share the link with the Board to share with their networks.

Dr. Dethoff suggested contacting Dr. Kelleher at the Berks Community Health Center for a possible partnership. He stated that he would like to take the survey to get an understanding of the survey questions. Ms. Camp stated that she will provide the link to the second survey.

Ms. Smith questioned how Latino Connection found people to complete the initial survey. Ms. Kammerer stated that they attended City events including First Fridays and National Night Out. She stated that they also attended other events and conducted surveys at bodegas, pharmacies and health centers, including Service Access Management. She stated that they met people at trusted sources.

Dr. Dethoff suggested that Ms. Kammerer and Ms. Camp attend future meetings when there is additional information.

Ms. Camp stated that there should be new information to share at the October meeting.

MONKEYPOX

Dr. Schwartz stated that she has not seen any cases of Monkeypox locally.

Dr. Dethoff noted the conflicting information about how this virus spreads.

Dr. Schwartz stated that physicians know the red flags and noted her hope that Monkeypox would be contained.

Dr. Dethoff stated that those who received a Smallpox vaccine would have some protection against Monkeypox. Dr. Schwartz agreed.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday, October 4 at 4 pm via Zoom.

Dr. Dethoff stated that a meeting would be scheduled prior to October 4 as needed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk