

Town of Topsfield Board of Health
Meeting of Thursday, October 11, 2012 ~ 7:30 pm
Town Hall, 8 West Common

Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Topsfield Board of Health Thursday, October 11, 2012 at 7:30 pm in Town Hall Conference Room.

With a quorum present, Mr. Hunt called the meeting to order at 7:39 pm

Board of Health Members present: Chairman William Hunt Esq.; Vice Chair Sheryl Knutsen, RN; Wade Goldman, P.E.; Vincent Guerra MD; Gerry Topping, P.E. (7:44 pm)

Also present: John Coulon, Health Agent; Catherine Tinsley, Minutes Secretary; Selectman Richard Gandt

Abbreviations used

BOH Board of Health

GPD Gallons Per Day

Public Information

Agenda

Meeting packet

APPOINTMENTS

22 Lockwood Lane: Septic System Variance Request

Present: Charles Johnson P.E., C.G. Johnson Engineering, Inc.

Mr. Johnson presented before the Board saying this is an on-site Wastewater Treatment and Dispersal System upgrade for an existing three-bedroom home.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the three different options available to the homeowner including a conventional system with pretreatment, a conventional system, an Innovative Alternate System involving pretreatment and a pressure dosed leach field. He informed the BOH that the homeowner's preference is the Innovative System and further explained in detail the preferred pretreatment (Waterloo Biofilter system). This is the most economical system for the site with less grading, and provides long-term performance.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the Waterloo System and the need for it to be maintained every two years and how this maintenance is tracked. The system is on file with Mass Department of Environmental Protection and the local BOH.

Vote: Mr. Topping moved to approve the Variance request in reduction of design flow from Topsfield Regulation of 600 GPD to State Code of 330 GPD, subject to C.G. Johnson Engineer submitting a compliant design for 22 Lockwood Lane to the BOH office. Ms. Knutsen seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

254 Ipswich Road: Septic System Variance Request

Present: John Morin, P.E., Neve-Morin

Mr. Morin presented before the Boards saying this is a repair of an existing system for a four-bedroom home; the system failed a Title V Inspection.

There are wetlands on the property, therefore the system is located in the rear of the property. He filed with the Conservation Commission to install the tank in the buffer zone.

VOTE: Mr. Topping moved to grant the variance requests for reduction in design flow from Topsfield's 200 GPD to Title V 110 GPD and to reduce the Title V required separation from ground water from 4 feet to 3 feet. Dr Guerra seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

MONTHLY CASE REVIEW

Present: Katie Chiffer, accompanied by her mother Joan Chiffer

Ms. Chiffer informed the Board that she is working on her Girl Scout's Gold Award.

Her project is called 'Project Lunch Box'.

She went on to explain her project, which includes raising awareness of ingredients in foods, educating and informing elementary students on healthy eating, and how it relates to their performance in school. There is a survey for the end of the year to assess the success of her program. The BOH asked her to share these results with them.

Ms. Chiffer talked about the classes, saying she is holding them at the Proctor School in the evening for parents and students focusing on a specific common food e.g. bread, salad dressing, and reviewing the ingredients on the labels and preparing a healthier option.

MS. Chiffer plans on blogging about her project and preparing a recipe book. www.projectlunchboxletseat.com.

The Board of Health was unanimous in their support of Ms Chiffer and her project and wished her well.

HEALTH AGENT'S REPORT

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)/West Nile Virus (WNV) Health Alert Status in Topsfield.

Mr. Coulon updated the Board saying the high-risk alert status is unchanged from emergency meeting. The Board is being forwarded the updates from the Department of Public Health and the town's web site is updated.

North East Mosquito Control was asked by Selectman Gandt to explain the decision to close town parks until the first hard frost. Mr. Coulon noted this must be 28 degrees or less for a minimum of two hours.

Mr. Coulon stated that further consideration to spray at the parks has been requested but towns with the Critical Risk Level have a priority.

For notifications, residents must register for NIXLE thru the Topsfield Police web site; it was suggested this information be available at the Holiday Walk on December 1st.

Emergency Preparedness / Medical Reserve Corps Update: Including January 9, 2013 CDC Audit

Mr. Coulon reviewed that on January 9, 2013, the Topsfield BOH is going to be audited by Centers of Disease Control & Prevention for Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) Plans; preparations are being made.

Chairman Hunt agreed to make introductory remarks at the Thursday, November 1, 2012 Emergency Preparedness meeting at the library.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

Mr. Coulon reported the MRC had a display at the Topsfield Fair that was staffed by eight people from four different Corps.

Review 2012 Topsfield Fair and Public Health

Mr. Coulon reported that there were about 126 food vendors; he will have more definitive numbers for the next meeting. He noted this was the seventh year he has worked the Fair and said from a food safety / public health perspective, this was the best year. There were no overflowing grey water retention tanks, no overflowing barrels in the housing trailer areas, minimal litter, and no missing backflow prevention devices.

The MA Partnership for Food Safety Education, Essex County Triad, Tri Town Council, and The Sun Safety Project all had displays at the fair. Along with the Topsfield Regional Medical Reserve Corps, these are all organizations to which the Topsfield Board of Health is a member.

MONTHLY CASE REVIEW: Project Lunch Box

Online Burial Permit Update - Funding for pilot program was cut. The Town Clerk Paula was not able to attend the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Minutes - September 13, 2012 / October 2, 2012 Emergency BOH Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Ms. Knutsen moved to accept the September 13, 2012 and October 2, 2012 meeting minutes.

Mr. Goldman seconded. Dr Guerra offered an edit to the October 2, 2012 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIALS

Review and Sign Warrant

The BOH reviewed and signed the warrants.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Coulon identified various communications to the BOH office, including:

MEHA Education Seminar Announcement Dedham on November 29, 2012

Communication (Fax) from school nurses re diseases affecting students presently

Topsfield Agriculture: Monday, October 22, Alfalfa Farm, sustainable farming project

The next BOH meeting is Thursday, November 15th.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion and Vote: Revise existing Topsfield Septic Regulations

Also Present: Chuck Johnson, John Morin, Gregor Smith a ZBA/private citizen

Goal: To update and consolidate the Topsfield Title V supplemental regulations

The Board will hold a public hearing on November 15, 2012.

Mr. Topping noted that there have been changes to Title V since the Topsfield regulations were first approved. The Health Agent discovered regulations that were voted on by TBOH at the July 2003 meeting but were never officially incorporated into the Topsfield Regulations available from the Town Clerk .

The Board reviewed and proposed language to update the Topsfield Regulations.

List of local regulations to be amended:

Regulations R:1-2.3

1. Section 3 (h) Soil Map

The recommendation was to delete soil information related to the Essex County Soil Conservation Survey. It is only to delete the requirement to put the soil survey information on the septic plan.

The referenced survey is still required on the application to the BOH as (DEP) Form 11, which is part of the file for the property but would not be required on the plan.

2. Section 3 (i)– USGS Datum Facilities

Delete requirement for USGS elevation datum. Data as outlined in Title V is sufficient to ensure correct vertical elevation relationship of septic system components.

Title V requirement elevations are listed from a benchmark. The benchmark does not have to be the USGS Datum; Title V allows option to choose which verifiable benchmark to use. USGS is usually used in new construction. A benchmark for repairs is a fixed point i.e. foundation.

It was the consensus of the Board that using USGS datum adds additional, unnecessary costs for homeowners.

3. Section 8 - Volume of Sanitary Sewage

To reduce from 200 GPD per bedroom to 110 GPD per bedroom uses less water due to changes to state plumbing code mandating low flow plumbing. A lengthy discussion followed regarding garbage grinders, which are not allowed in Topsfield. Mr. Topping did not support garbage grinders and stressed garbage grinders cause premature failure of septic systems. Others noted that grinders could be supported with larger septic systems as allowed in Title V.

4. Section 14 - Deep Observation Holes: Recommendation is to delete section and default to Title V.

Local regulations require for two deep holes at system location, and two deep holes in the reserve area. Title V also requires same deep test holes in primary and two in the reserve area, but Title V allows when trenches are used that only two test holes are dug. Local regulations require the bottom of the bed inspection by the Health Agent. This allows for the determination by the Board of Health Agent for additional Deep Observation Holes, if needed.

This would not change the way the testing is done.

5. Section 16 - Number of Perc Tests Required

Section 16 requires three percolation tests. This would be deleted and default to Title V that requires two percolation tests for a proposed system; one in primary area and one in reserve area.

Title V does not allow overnight soak but requires a 15 minute presoak to cause expandable soils to react and expand before testing. Soils subjected to water for 24 hours do not further saturate soils for testing.

It was noted that some states no longer require perc testing but depend on soil observation.

The title for Section 16 would change to "Percolation Tests" and include the same text "Only the maximum allowable percolation rate shall be 20 minutes per inch."

The local agent on site has the authority to require more test holes.

Title V prohibits septic systems to be built in fill. The most restrictive natural layer is used as the start of the test hole.

The Board talked about the effects of increasing the Topsfield Percolation Rate to the Title V rate of 60 minutes per inch for new construction. By increasing the perc rate to that allowed by Title V, is the public's health adequately protected?

Storm water runoff could affect the perc rate and performance of a system.

7. Section 18 - Leaching area requirements

Title V has not been around long enough to determine if failure has to do with design alone.

The Board directed the Health Agent to prepare for a Public Hearing on November 15, 2012 to consider amendments to specific regulations of the Topsfield Board of Health rules and regulations.

Executive Session (ES)

VOTE: Dr Guerra moved to enter into ES at 10:32 pm according to MGL Chapter 39, section 23A and 23B (1) To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual and (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and to return to open session for the purpose of adjourning. Mr. Goldman seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

At 11:15 pm, the Board returned to open session.

While in ES, the Health Agent presented the proposed organizational chart for review by the BOH. It was determined that this was not appropriate for ES and on a unanimous roll call vote, the Board returned to open session.

The Board reviewed the "Proposed Organizational Chart for Town Departments" issued by the Topsfield Government Review Committee. The Board noted its objection to the Health Agent listed as reporting to the Town Administrator and the Board of Health is listed as reporting to the Board of Selectmen. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regulations will be further reviewed to confirm the Health Agent reports to the BOH.

VOTE: Mr. Topping moved to adjourn at 11:25 pm and it was voted unanimously to do so.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley

