



TOWN OF GROTON
Board of Health
173 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450

MEETING MINUTES
June 16, 2014

Board of Health Members Present:

Jason Weber, Chairman
Robert Fleischer, Member
Susan Horowitz, Member

Others Present:

Ira Grossman, Health Agent
Regina Beausoleil, Interdepartmental Assistant

Meeting Called to Order:

Chairman Weber called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall.

Reorganization of the Board

Member Horowitz made a motion to nominate Chairman Weber to stay on as Chair. Member Fleischer seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Raw Milk – Helen Cahene

*Jean Evans Nordin stated for the Board and audience members she was recording audio and visual of this portion of the meeting.

Chairman Weber asked that all participants in the discussion be succinct and respectful of each other, the Board and any audience members.

Member Horowitz made a statement that this was not about denying anyone's right to agriculture or business but about protecting the public health. Member Fleischer agreed.

Helene stated a guest speaker has been asked to attend the meeting and give his perspective on the request.

Helene then began answering some of the questions the Board had requested more information on during the previous meeting:

- 1) What is the inspection process during construction? *The state is willing to come on the premises during the construction process.*
- 2) How many Dairy's in the state? *29. From information from the Farm Bureau*

- 3) *Illnesses? Illnesses are difficult to diagnose by the time actual sickness sets in.*
- 4) *How are inspections run? Monthly, however MDAR can do weekly or even daily if they choose or have a reason to do so. MDAR require all sales be recorded. Keeping a record of all buyers.*

Mr. David Gumpert of “The Complete Patient” dot com was asked to appear before the board as a guest speaker and proponent of Raw Milk. Mr. Gumpert has two published books in 2009 and in 2103. He stated this was about food safety. The CDC will argue raw milk is unsafe. If raw milk was unsafe, people wouldn’t be drinking it. He stated there has not been one reported illness from raw milk in Massachusetts, New Hampshire or Maine. He’s not suggesting people do not fall ill to raw milk, because they do. So how risky is it? All foods can make people sick. In 2012, 32 people died from a salmonella outbreak from cantaloupe. No one suggested banning those foods. In 2007 3 people died and one miscarried from pasteurized milk from a local dairy here in Massachusetts. There is no discernable trend.

Jean Nordin Evans spoke and stated she has been a dentist since 1999. She has put 3 of her children on raw goats milk since the age of 6 month and has never had an issue. She stated she had to drive from Groton to Goffstown New Hampshire in order to purchase her raw milk. She feels it is imperative to move forward.

Chairman Weber stated after a review of the bylaw there is a ban on sale of raw milk and there is a milk commission that is supposed to be appointed.

Ms. Nordin-Evans asked what the Board’s jurisdiction was. She stated the Board did not have to agree with raw milk but could allow it. She asked if the Board knew if anyone else had made a similar request. Chairman Weber answered not to his knowledge.

Mr. Gumpert stated the City of Framingham recently reversed their ban on raw milk sales about 5 years ago. It can be done.

Bob Jackson, an area Chiropractor stated his children were raised on raw milk and cream and that his grandchildren now consume it. They are robust and healthy children and he recommends raw to his patients.

Cynthia Labbe, Registered nurse and owner of a farm in town asked if the state is allowing licensing and monitoring then why the Board of Health won’t allow it. She stated there are herd sharing programs out there but it’s not something people like to do.

Steve Lane of Common Street stated there have been 4 Master Plans done since 1967. He feels the Town offices should promote agriculture as outlined in those Master Plans.

Member Horowitz stated it wasn’t about the Master Plans but about public safety as she stated at the beginning of the meeting.

Ms. Cahen asked if the Board received a letter from Winton Pitcoff, Project Manager for Mass Food System Planning Plan. Chairman Weber stated he did receive the letter. He stated no one is critiquing the state’s ability to do its job. He added that he is interested in Mr. Gumpert’s studies on the benefits of raw milk. Chairman Weber then asked Mr. Grossman for his thoughts.

Mr. Grossman stated he had no thoughts on certification as that is the duty of the state. He said the state would conduct monthly inspections, more frequently if warranted or necessary. As far as raw vs. pasteurized, his bottom line was that pasteurized products are safer.

Member Horowitz said she heard from a Groton resident that called to tell her a story of how she (the resident) was sickened as a result of consuming raw milk, was hospitalized, and almost died as a result. She said the caller asked to remain anonymous.

Mr. Grossman stated he followed on this issue with nurses at Nashoba Associated Boards of Health and also went to the Department of Public Health. Almost all of the information he received blamed or pointed to raw milk as being less safe and leading to e.g. Gastroenteritis.

Chairman Weber said he would be interested in adding a label to any raw milk product. Several audience members spoke up to say the state already requires a label.

Chairman Weber made a motion to continue the discussion to July 7th to allow more time for research. Member Fleischer seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

11 Cedar Road – Frank and Beth Wotjas

Frank Wotjas homeowner said he made the decision to tie into Town Water. Mr. Grossman asked what his timeframe was, adding three points:

- The date of failure was sometime in 2005
- He recommended that this be resolved by November 1, 2015
- November 15 is the last day road permits are allowed to be opened

Member Horowitz made a motion to allow 11 Cedar Road till November 1, 2015 to connect to Town water in order to be considered in compliance by Title 5 standards. Member Fleischer seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

945 Townsend Road – Katherine Marsh

Homeowner Katherine Marsh was before the Board at the Board's request to discuss the non-compliance issue at 945 Townsend Road. She said the well contractor was supposed to take care of getting the water quality results to the NABOH. Mr. Grossman stated there were numerous other issues such as an illegal burn that was reported, as well as trash and debris about the property.

Ms. Marsh said she fell on hard times and is finding it difficult to dispose of the trash and debris due to the cost. Ms. Marsh agreed to contact Mr. Grossman to arrange a time to conduct water quality testing, and agreed to report back at the July 21st meeting.

Mr. Grossman added that additional security measures were necessary to secure the pool, such as fencing.

Member Horowitz said she would talk to the Highway Superintendent to discuss waiving the transfer station fees in order to help facilitate the clean-up of the property.

101 Lost Lake Drive

Mr. Grossman provided the Board with a summary of the history of this property. He said a permit was issued for new construction, and the applicant had to go before the ZBA. The applicants then withdrew that plan and submitted a new plan classified as a renovation. This seemed odd, given that the property had not been used in 20-30 years. Mr. Grossman added that

he had emailed the Building Commissioner to see if he (the Building Commissioner) was leaning towards approving or denying the permit.

*Member Horowitz made a motion to not let the permit move forward
Member Fleischer seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.*

43 Boston Road

Mr. Grossman provided the Board with an update on this property, which is currently up for sale. The seller is obligated to notify the buyer about the pending CHP 190 by-law that would require any buyer to connect to town sewer within a specified time frame. Mr. Grossman said he would work with Regina Beausoleil to draft a letter to send to the current owner.

Next meeting dates:

July 7

July 21

August 4

August 18

Sept 8

Sept 22

Member Fleischer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM. Member Horowitz seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Regina Beausoleil

Approved 1/4/16