

**TOWN OF GROTON**

Board of Health

173 Main Street

Groton, MA 01450

**BOARD OF HEALTH**

Jason Weber, Chairman

Susan Horowitz, Member

Robert J. Fleischer, Member

Date: Monday, January 6, 2020

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Groton Town Hall, 173 Main Street

Members Present: Jason Weber, Chairman; Dr. Susan Horowitz, Member; Robert J. Fleischer, Member; Ira Grossman, Nashoba Associated Board of Health Agent

Others Present: Sammie Kul

Jason Weber called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**THE NATURAL MARKET – Non-Compliance with Food Code Requirements**

The owner of The Natural Market Joan Reardon was present.

Ira Grossman provided a brief overview. The Natural Market has been operating without current Food Manager or Allergen Awareness Certificates. The Food Code gives an establishment 60 days to get the certificates if they expire or if a Food Manager leaves. Per Groton’s Food Inspector it has been well over six months since an order was issued to have an employee certified.

Ms. Reardon explained that the employee who was supposed to obtain the certifications left unexpectedly and no longer works there. Ms. Reardon stated that she has been studying and plans to take the certification exams during the first week of February.

Ms. Reardon would like to re-open the kitchen of the Natural Market and asked whether her part-time employee who did have the appropriate certifications could still provide food services. Mr. Grossman said he would check with the food inspector regarding the minimum number of hours a certified employee was required to work for an establishment to be compliant.

The Board asked Ms. Reardon to inform the food inspector as soon as she obtains the certifications discussed.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS – DISCUSSION OF PFAS**

Josh and Amy Degen were present as a follow up to their meeting in September. Additionally, Mr. Degen forwarded the attached articles concerning PFAS to Board members.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) met with other states to review research on bio solids. The DEP came up with a new approach for regulating anything biosolid-based that will be available for sale, wither a new or existing product.

Ira Grossman observed that it lacking evidence otherwise it would be an assumption to conclude that there were PFAS in any fertilizer already spread in Groton. With respect to the fields near the Degen’s home, the product was not known to be tested and therefore it could not be said to have contained PFAS.

Ira Grossman explained that PFAS levels have yet to be formally regulated at the state level, although such regulation is expected. New regulations are expected to require that any biosolid products for sale are tested for PFAS.

Asked about local options for addressing PFAS-related risks, Ira Grossman said that the Groton Board of Health (BOH) could implement a more stringent local regulation. In his opinion this could include prohibitions in use. For example, the BOH could require additional testing of substances suspected of containing PFAS prior to their application or use in order to prove their safety.

Mr. Degen said he was concerned not knowing what effects PFAS may have if ingested by animals which were then consumed by the public (the food chain).

Tom Orcutt from the Groton Water Department shared his surprise at learning of chemicals that were toxic at the parts per trillion level. Groton completed some initial testing and the results show PFAS in our public water supply wells. Fortunately, the levels measured are below the current safe standard of 70 parts per trillion. However, the source of these contaminants is unknown.

Mr. Grossman reiterated the lack of any proven connection between the use of bio solids in Groton and the presence of PFAS in town wells.

Mr. Orcutt asked whether a six or twelve month stop order on the use of bio solids as fertilizer in Groton until more safety information was available would make sense.

The Board recognized the challenge of testing for the thousands of different chemicals and compounds that may be harmful to the public health.

Mr. Degen suggested placing a moratorium instead of a complete ban.

Chair Weber reiterated the lack of any proven connection between the use of bio solids in Groton and the presence of PFAS in town wells.

Mr. Grossman said he thinks there is enough evidence available at this time to support a moratorium on biosolid fertilizer sales while the safety research continues. The members voiced support for this idea.

Mr. Grossman said he was not opposed to a moratorium but foresaw enforcement being an issue. He explained that Tier 1 products do not require notification of the Board of Health when used. As a result, he thought it might be effective/worthwhile to engage in dialogue with the state.

After some discussion, Mr. Grossman agreed to contact the state DEP and inform them that the Groton BOH was discussing this topic and wanted to make progress on it.

The Board members agreed to do more research on this topic and to continue this discussion at their next meeting. Member Fleischer will speak to someone from the Agricultural Commission and invite them to the next BOH meeting. The goal of engaging with the Agricultural Commission is to raise awareness in town government and with the end users of biosolid-based products.

Mr. Grossman agreed to reach out to the broker for Casella Organics and let them know that the fertilizer used in September at Old Orchard Farms may be disallowed in Groton if a moratorium or other action is approved.

**MEETING MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes dated December 16, 2019.

**Robert Fleischer moved to accept the meeting minutes dated December 16th, 2019 with edits. Dr. Susan Horowitz seconded and the motion carried.**

**INVOICES**

Board members reviewed and signed variances, permits and invoices.

**TOBACCO PERMITS**

Tobacco permit renewals for 2020 were issued by the Board of Health on January 6th, 2020.

**Robert Fleischer moved to recognize tobacco permits as technically complete, while noting that the Board of Health discourages the use of all tobacco products including vaping for any purpose other than tobacco cessation. Dr. Susan Horowitz seconded and the motion carried.**

**Robert Fleischer moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Dr. Susan Horowitz seconded and the motion carried.**

Minutes by Sammie Kul.

**APPROVED: February 3, 2020**