



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Call to Order: Elaine Silva – Chair, Candace Linehan – Vice Chair, Marcy McCauley – Secretary at 6:32pm.

Administration present: Anthony Chui – Director, Daniel Thompson – Health Inspector, Melissa Lowry – Regional Public Health Nurse, Jonathon Chines – Town Councilor Daniel Lieber – Bylaw Review Committee

Public Engagement: Leslie Scott comments on Rodenticide discussion about improving education on the subject and working with vendors and local companies to use alternatives to rodenticides. Leslie stated the necessity for more detailed meeting agendas going forward. Leslie commented agendas have not been posted since August 2024. Leslie also requested that Director Chui be more thorough about inspections and current dealings of the Health Department in his Director Reports. **Public Participation closed: 6:40pm.**

Rodenticide Discussion: Director Chui discussed receiving notification regarding the use of rodenticides on town property, specifically concerned with animals that eat rodents being poisoned. Daniel Lieber explained that the Bylaw Review Committee started review over a year ago. The town uses various types of rodenticides, used by private individuals as well. Having met with MDAR (Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources) and as a town, it is determined the Bylaw Committee can make bylaws for public property, but otherwise it is a public health issue. Zoning has also been contacted and is supportive of this.

Laura Kiesel, wildlife biologist and subject matter expert in rodenticide, is present to speak on the matter of rodenticide. Laura is a wildlife biologist and the founder of Save Wildlife Arlington. Arlington banned SGAR's (Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides) on public property and submitted home rule petition to ban SGAR's on private property. Laura led a presentation on the dangers of poison and recommended they should not be used. The board discussed the current regulations that are in place, specifically about alternatives and what our policy is for rodent abatement permits. Daniel Lieber recommends a crawl-walk-run approach. Start with making it illegal on public and municipal properties and increase from there. The Board discussed scheduling a meeting with the DPW to see how many rodent complaints were recorded in FY2024, how many construction projects we had going on, and so on. The Board also recommended to reach out to Arlington Health Department for their pest control plans currently being used.



Marijuana Overlay District Discussion: Daniel Lieber comments about the marijuana overlay district as it will be discussed again at Town Meeting. The new proposal for the overlay district has expanded and commercial use is now being argued for all permissible usages with no change in location. The opinion is that the town should not reconsider this proposal as it has expanded use and not changed anything else about the proposal. Daniel Lieber believes this is very much a public health issue and it should involve the health department and their advocacy. Recommends the board of health votes to make a recommendation at the next town meeting.

Liaison Parker Hamlin Public Comment: Parker Hamlin commented the marijuana store is aimed at being put next to a school.

Laurel Gourville Public Comment: Laurel recommended collaborating with WakeUp Coalition and continuing the work with them. Laurel recommended the marijuana overlay district should not be approved, and the Board of Health should voice its concerns at town meeting.

Jonathon chines Public Comment: Councilor Chines clarified the location of the district is about a half a mile away from the odyssey day school. School of Rock was originally next to the site but is now closed. Just wanted to clarify what parker previously mentioned.

Director Chui recommended the Board have a statement for the planning board meeting on April 8th, 2025. Board to vote on opinion. Chair Silva makes a motion to not recommend the marijuana overlay district due to the lack of data and the history of the CCC (Cannabis Control Commission). All in favor 3-0-0. Approved.

Health Department Budget Overview: Director Chui commented on the town meeting to discuss budgets was on March 25th, 2025, and was very successful. Director Chui's presentation highlighted budget necessities, as well as several accomplishments of the department. Some of the highlights of the presentation are as follows. We continue to apply for grants in this tough environment, but the department just submitted for a grant (Prevention Framework Services Grant) submitted with Melrose and Stoneham also to support substance abuse prevention.

The department has welcomed Madhumitha Mohanraj, Prevention & Wellness Coordinator. This position works with youth action team and middle/high schoolers. Madhumitha brings a wide range of experience and is a superb addition to the team.

Sandra Siguenza-Hache is the newest member of the department, taking over the role of Social Services Coordinator. Sandra has great experience working with all age ranges and takes over the much-needed role.

Inspector Dan Thompson and Sr. Inspector Erin Carleo reported on food inspections, active permits, and enforcement standards. In 2024 we conducted 190 routine food inspections, and 45 follow-up re-inspections to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations. We are now about three months into the year with no major concerns regarding food establishments. The Department has also had 132 food establishment permits and 10 total plan reviews in 2024. There has been significant growth and several new food establishments. There are 339 dumpster permits recorded in 2024 as well. Discussed further metrics on other permitting. The nurses have improved their structuring and focus areas, such as health promotion, opioid overdose prevention, summer camps and recreational safety, flu and vaccines, and communicable disease monitoring.

The highlight of 2024 was the passage of Nicotine Free Generation. Communities such as Somerville, Newton, and Chelsea, have also adopted NFG totaling 15 communities in Massachusetts. Decrease in tobacco permits and youth compliance checks continue to ensure compliance and education.

Health Director's report: Public Health Nurses have been very occupied. The nurses put together a presentation about camp regulations for all three communities in order for them to understand the focus of the state. This includes the need for education among camp staff, training in medication administration documentation and reporting, and general understanding of what the camps are responsible for. Public Health Nurse Sandra Brown has been working to give out Narcan and training on Narcan for all town employees, which starts next week. We have Narcan at the health department that we also give out on site. Ideally, once training is completed, we can make it available at all public buildings. We must track all Narcan that's giving out in quantities (not who it is given to).

Adjournment: Next meeting will be tentatively held on April 30th, 2025. Silva motion to close the meeting, seconded by Linehan, meeting adjourned at 8:40pm by roll call 3-0-0.