



## TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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**Call to order:** Elaine Silva, Chair called the meeting to order @ 6:41pm

**Attendance:** Elaine Silva, Chair, Candace Linehan, Vice chair, Marcy McCauley, Secretary.

**Administration Present:** Daniel Thompson, Health Inspector, Anthony Chui, Health Director, Melissa Lowry, Public Health Nurse, Jonathon Chines, Town Councilor, Maureen Buzby, Tobacco Inspection Coordinator.

**Public Engagement:** None. Public Participation closed at 6:42pm

### **Other Business not Reasonably Anticipated - Sakura Organic 397**

**Main Street:** Inspector Dan Thompson brings to the Board food safety issues at Sakura. A recent report has identified several repeat violations, as well as the record confirming many issues that have been cited in the past are repeated. Mark Zhong (owner) acknowledges these issues and states he will try his best to fix these outstanding issues. Inspector Thompson emphasizes the point about the significance of repeat violations, as well as prior meetings that have been had with food consultants. Some of these issues include sushi HACCP plan being misused, rodent infestation, and general unsanitary conditions. Mark Zhong states he has pest control come in twice per month and determined that the problem is the building itself. Mr. Zhong hired a contractor to look at the entire building and seal all possible entrances. Mr. Zhong claims whenever it rains it floods into the kitchen, and that is what causes floor damage to the back of the restaurant. Secretary McCauley comments she'd like to hear his pest controller's opinion and if his rodent activity has changed over the course of the years. Chair Linehan identifies a theme of non-compliance with cleaning, food storage, cold storage, etc. feels there needs to be a real plan for them to follow for actual change. Mr. Zhong states his employees know the HACCP procedure well, but they are nervous because there is a language barrier. Secretary McCauley asks Inspector Thompson questions regarding food consulting. Vice Chair Silva's recommendation is to remain closed until the company comes in to clean the entire building from top to bottom, then have an exterminator come in and do the treatment then have health department inspect. Another food consultant is required as well. Director Chui states this has been a trend with Sakura with one closure per year over repeated issues. Our concern is this will continue, and we've closed a restaurant permanently in the past over repeated food safety issues. Director Chui asks the board to consider permanent closure if this severe level of inspection happens again. The Board deliberated and



determined that there must be a food consultant for at least six months. Mr. Zhong acknowledges the decision.

Vice Chair Silva makes a motion to require a food safety consultant to be hired, and favorable inspections be had for 6 months. If not, they will be brought back to the Board for review and strongly consider permanently revoking their food permit. All in favor 3-0-0. Approved.

### **Wakefield Convenience Food Permit and Tobacco Violation**

**Discussion:** Director Chui received an application for a food permit from Wakefield Convenience. They serve pre-packaged, non-TCS food only. Under previous owner, there was a tobacco permit, but has since been dissolved as ownership has changed. In late 2024, a compliance check was conducted, and an unauthorized purchase of a flavored product occurred resulting in a fine. When the business was sold, the tobacco permit was not transferred, and no tobacco products could have legally been for sale at all. During their food permit inspection last week, it was found that there was a rodent infestation within the store. During this food inspection, Director Chui and Inspector Thompson discovered a large amount of tobacco products still on site in one of the storage closets spanning from general tobacco products to illegal flavored products. The Department has reason to believe they were actively selling these products because of how accessible they were in the storage closet. Old tobacco and vaping signage was still posted on the site during this inspection as well, even though they are not permitted to sell tobacco products.

Vice Chair Silva inquires if the permit cap for NFG (Nicotine Free Generation) can allow them a permit. Tobacco Inspection Coordinator Maureen Buzby comments that as of two years ago there are no new permits regardless of the business transaction. Maureen explains the inspection and the history of violations with Wakefield Convenience. Maureen also specifies that when there is no tobacco permit there is NO tobacco product to be in the store. Maureen called DOR (Department of Revenue) agent had the employee working box everything up in the store for DOR agent to confiscate. Chair Linehan wants us to ensure that we follow up on the tobacco product issue regardless of whether the food permit is pursued by the owner. Anthony tells Jonathon we can provide a report to him. Councilor Chines would like to be updated and claims that there is potential for the Common Victualler license to be revoked depending on the circumstances going forward. Director Chui states we will reach out to the owner to let them know we're ready to inspect again and make sure their issues are corrected.

**Public Health Nurses Report:** Public Health Nurse Melissa Lowry discussed a fair amount of flu cases, covid-19, and a few cases of norovirus. We are

seeing salmonella and shigella in our database, but overall not a lot of cases! Melissa and Sandra did a Naloxone presentation for town staff at the senior center. We are putting naloxone boxes in all town buildings next to AED's. There will be training provided for all town staff as well, currently being scheduled. We get free naloxone from the state that we can pass out anonymously. The goal is to reduce the number of overdoses. Public Health Nurses (PHN's) in all three towns are working preparing for tick and mosquito season. Plan to make educational material to post on website. Melissa will also do a post on measles.

Sandra and Melissa have also done extensive work with the camp regulations and did the training for camps in all three towns for their applicants. We will be focusing a lot on training non-medical staff, healthcare consultants, and so on. We want to ensure that the kids getting medications at camp are being given it correctly and safely with proper documentation and storage.

**Health Director's Report:** Sr. Environmental Health Specialist Erin Carleo's last day with us is tomorrow. Erin has worked with us for the past three years. We are supportive and excited for her and her plans moving forward.

The Department has hired a new administrative assistant and is going through pre-employment protocols now. They will likely be present for the next meeting.

**Next meeting to be scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025 @ 6:30pm.**  
**Vice Chair Silva motions to adjourn at 7:59pm, all in favor 3-0-0**  
**MEETING ADJOURNED.**