

Minutes

Board of Health Minutes

February 27, 2023

Present: Joel Muhlbaum, Esq., Danielle Goodwin, DDS; Sarah Gamble, DO; Sarah Madden; Maryann Ramos, MPH PA-C Emeritus; Lauren O’Keefe. APN, FNP-BC and Anne Fountain, MPH

Staff: Caroline Baisley, Director of Health; Debora Edwards, Operations Administrator; Michael Long, Director of Environmental Services; Robin Clark-Smith, Director of Special Clinical Services

Presenters: Quiet Yards Greenwich: Elizabeth Dempsey, Svetlana Wasserman, Karen Dewahl
Presenters: Amy Brown, M.D.; Sarah F. Evans, PhD; Jamie Banks, PhD; Sophie C. Koven, J.D.; Jeff Cordulack; Nelson Munoz; Robin Clark-Smith, Director of Special Clinical Services

The ZOOM Meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Joel Muhlbaum, Esq. at 6:37 pm

Minutes

The draft minutes of the January 30, 2023 meeting were discussed. No edits were requested. Motion to accept the draft minutes as submitted was approved and accepted. **(Motion: O’Keefe / Second: Madden / Vote: 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining)**

Gasoline Powered Leaf Blowers Presentation by Quiet Yards Greenwich: (Full transcript of speakers is on the town webpage at <https://www.greenwichct.gov/agendacenter>.)

Karen Dewhal:

- Leaf Blowers were used seasonally and now they are used year-round causing noise and air pollution with other garden equipment.

Jamie Bank, PhD, MSc, Quiet Communities Inc. – Founder and President:

- Studies have shown workers need to wear ear protection when operating gasoline garden equipment.

- Quiet Communities, Inc. looks to transition the industry to reduce noise especially gardening equipment which includes gasoline leaf blowers.
- Low frequency components in noise may increase adverse effects.
- EPA levels for communities is 55dba.
- Noise in general can also have an affect on hearing, cardio vascular disease, respiratory system, reduce work productivity, a value of life, etc.
- Noise can cause even at low levels cognitive and learning disabilities.
- Exhaust bi-products of two-stroke gasoline operated engines contribute to air pollutants.
- Noise from gasoline operated leaf blowers is at a higher noise level.

Sarah Evans, PhD

- Chemicals in air have been emitted by lawn and garden gasoline operated equipment items.
- Air pollution impacts a person's health.
- Pregnant women, children, and the elderly are considered vulnerable groups to air pollution.
- Early life exposure to environmental toxins and health affects of toxins.
- Lawn and gardening equipment give rise to air pollutants which are associated with millions of deaths a year globally and may be associated with other health problems and conditions.
- Operations of two stroke engines over EPA noise limits.
- Noise in general can prompt stress and respiratory factors.

Amy Brown, MD:

- Air pollutant emissions has had independent and synergistic effects in respiratory health.
- American Academy of Pediatrics outline hazards to children related to ambient air planes.
- Gasoline operated leaf blowers can distribute particular matter in the air.
- Air pollution can lead to health effects.
- Dr. Brown invest time and energy into nurturing a generation of future healthy adults.

Elizabeth Dempsey interviews Nelson Munoz and Jeff Cordulack:

- Asked Nelson Munoz owner of Fierro-Chiappetta Landscaping about using electric garden tools. Mr. Munoz has one crew who only use electrical equipment. They landscape nine acres of Putnam Park and other condominium properties. Expense of running the machines is not much different from gas since he uses the client's electrical outlets. Clients love electric service since it is quieter and no toxic pollution.
- Interview with Jeff Cordulack, President of Organic Ways and Means Landscaping. His company uses electric gardening equipment. He mentioned his workers are happy not using gas equipment and maintenance is low for these machines. Also, clients are pleased as the noise is much lower.

Svetlana Wasserman:

- Quiet Yards Greenwich recommendation is a four-year phasing plan for gasoline operated leaf blowers. They worked with landscapers to come up with the outlined times to use gasoline operated leaf blowers.
- Proposed changes to the Board of Health's Noise Ordinance:

Year 1: No change to let landscaper and homeowners prepare

Year 2: Gas Blowers allowed from April 1 to May 1 and October 15 to December 15

Year 3: Gas Blowers allowed from April 1 to April 21 and November 1 to December 15

Year 4 and After: Gas Blowers allowed from April 1 to April 15 and November 1 to November 15

Special Clinical Services HIV/STD Update:

- This year 8th and 10th graders Educational programs were able to be taught in person although there were frequent adjustments. Flexibility was necessary to get all programs scheduled.
- The bloodborne pathogen programs training continued for police, fire and schools personal. Blood titer are drawn on newly vaccinated employees to determine protection.
- The STI clinic continues to operate by appointment with clients being asked to wear masks. Patient screening is conducted prior to arriving in the clinic. This process allows for a more efficient and safe operation. A seasoned nurse practitioner from Greenwich Hospital continues to assist with clients.
- A couple of new issues emerged last sprint it was Monkeypox and just recently there were a few cases of drug resistant gonorrhea in Massachusetts. This is very concerning.
- To handle Monkeypox cases, the State Health Department sent personal protective (PPE) along with sample collection instructions etc. In terms of gonorrhea, the CDC treatment guidelines have changed the treatment guidelines call for double the amount of antibiotics.
- Recently this month the State Health Department started a coalition to prevent and reduce sexual transmitted infections. Follow up meetings have been scheduled.
- Finally, the Division is waiting for a State inspection of the clinic and contract tracing of COVID-19 patients. Continue although the number of cases is going down thankfully.

Other Business:

- Chair Joel Muhlbaum stated that the Board's Research and Review Committee on Gasoline Leaf Blowers will take the presentation into consideration. The Board's Committee may make a recommendation to the full Board at the March 2023 scheduled meeting if all the materials that were submitted are evaluated.

Motion to adjourn requested at 8:02 pm by Joel Muhlbaum, Esq. (Motion: Madden / Second: Fountain)

Minutes prepared by, Debora Edwards, Operations Administrator 3/10/23

Respectfully submitted by Danielle Goodwin, Secretary 3/14/23