

MINUTES

Board of Health Meeting

May 23, 2016

Present: Robert Carangelo, Esq.; Dr. Marilyn Ross Cahn; Dr. Robert Ailleo; Dr. Andrew Bronin; Julia Chiappetta; Dr. Michael Franco; Kurt Schaffir; Caroline C. Baisley, Director

Guests: Alex Bergstein, Abby Levy, Sarah Evans, Greening Our Children; Denise Savageau, Conservation Director; Joseph Siciliano, Director of Parks and Recreation and Bruce Spaman, Superintendent and Tree Warden; Dr. Peter Arturi, Physician of Record; Representative Fred Camillo; Ron Matten and James Hricay, Greenwich Public Schools; Ellen Murdock, RTM Health and Human Services Committee; Vick Sandhu, Prospective Board Member; Evan Triantafilidis, Greenwich Sentinel

Staff: Ann Augustine; Carol Dixon; Michael Long; Deborah Travers

Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM, noting that the meeting is devoted to pesticides and discussed the ground rules for proceeding with the meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 25, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

(Motion: Bronin / Second: Franco/ Vote: – 7 in favor - 0 opposed)

PRESENTATION FROM GREENING OUR CHILDREN

Abby Levy, Chair of Greening Our Children, complemented the Town on its efforts in maintaining an organic program on all Town property. She noted that Greening Our Children has been in touch with several agencies and officials in Town, including the First Selectman, Representative Fred Camillo, Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation, Green and Clean and others to request support for efforts to educate residents about the dangers of pesticides. Ms. Levy requested that the Board of Health support the education efforts. She proposed that Greening Our Children would like to provide educational flyers at Town Hall and public events; post information on the Town website on how to maintain a pesticide-free lawn; coordinate a Townwide Kick-off Safe Lawns Campaign and to publicize the effort through the local media, letters to the editor and social media. Ms. Levy asked for cooperation to publicly support the campaign.

Chairman noted that most of the requested actions would be under the purview of the First Selectman and because of political implications, Board support or a resolution encouraging residents to maintain pesticide free lawns would not be appropriate.

In light of Lyme disease, West Nile Virus and Zika Virus, Dr. Ross Cahn's inquired about Greening Our Children's plan for dealing with mosquitoes and ticks. Ms. Levy stated that it is important to monitor for ticks, wear long pants and socks in the woods and be aware of mosquito activity.

Dr. Sarah Evans briefly reviewed her background, noting that she is an instructor in the Children's Environmental Health Center at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, a neuroscientist and is

committed to public outreach and advocacy efforts to protect families from toxic chemicals. Dr. Evans stated that pesticides interfere with nervous system development and child behavior. Children are particularly vulnerable to toxins in pesticides. At Dr. Bronin's inquiry, Dr. Evans stated that pesticides that are most commonly used by landscapers are being re-studied by the Environmental Protection Agency. Epidemiological studies take a long time to complete and it is difficult to prove causality, but the evidence suggests probable health risk from exposure to pesticides.

The Safe Lawn Campaign will target lawn pesticides including insecticide, herbicides and fungicides. Dr. Bronin stated that he agrees that education is important, but a resolution to encourage residents to avoid pesticide use is not appropriate. Ms. Chiappetta stated that while the Town is doing a great job, it is desirable for parents to also avoid pesticide use.

Representative Fred Camillo noted that while some people use organic lawn care products, neighbors using pesticides also affects others. Medical research points to danger in pesticides.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON PESTICIDE USE ON TOWN PROPERTY

Mr. Siciliano, Director of Parks and Recreation stated that in 2008, the Board of Selectman passed a resolution to ban pesticides on athletic fields and subsequently the ban was expanded to all Town property that the Department of Parks and Recreation maintains (except the golf course). As a result, a consultant was hired to analyze each field in Town. A comprehensive plan was developed for an organic plan for playing surfaces and it is used regularly. In 2009, the Department of Parks and Recreation requested \$300,000 in their budget to implement the organic turf management plan and field maintenance. It took several years of training and program maintenance to make the organic program to be successful. The Town also uses an Integrated Pest Management program which was revised in 2014 when necessary. All turf management staff are trained and licensed. Mr. Siciliano noted that last year there were over 25,000 scheduled field events on 59 athletic surfaces.

Bruce Spaman, Superintendent of Parks and Tree Warden, stated that maintaining an organic program is labor intensive and costly, but it is well worth it. Over seeding and aerating is done often and watering is a key element. Dr. Franco commended the Department of Parks and Recreation for an excellent program and asked whether the Town program could be scalable for resident use. Mr. Spaman stated that it is very possible for residents and private landscapers to accomplish a similar outcome. Ms. Chiappetta believed that an educational effort would be effective and should be put up on the website. Mr. Siciliano noted that it would be advantageous for Greening Our Children to make contact with some of neighborhood associations in back country and use community partners that the Conservation Commission used to get their message out.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH ON PESTICIDE USE

Denise Savageau, Conservation Director, noted that Integrated Pest Management is a different way of dealing with pests using pesticides only when necessary. She stated that overuse of pesticides results in intolerance. Ms. Savageau noted that in Greenwich water use for lawn watering rises in the summer from 12 million gallons a day in the winter to 30 million gallons a day in the summer, putting a strain on the water supply. The Conservation Commission advocates for more gardens and less lawns. Proper management will result in healthy lawns. Ms. Savageau noted that the pesticide applicators are the vulnerable population and education is important for them to understand the dangers. The Conservation Commission has a small staff and relies on community partners to provide outreach and education about organic landscaping, including the Audubon, Greenwich Community Gardens, the Garden Education Center.

STATE/FEDERAL REGULATIONS ON PESTICIDES

Mr. Long reported that the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines pesticides, chemicals and commercial applicators and proper application process.

State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) implements the federal regulations. The State researches certain aspects of pesticides through its Toxicology Program. Dr. Ailleo inquired about residents with wells as it relates to chemical use on lawns. Ms. Savageau noted that a recent groundwater study found trace amounts of lawn pesticides in groundwater. Major outreach was done after the report was issued. Ms. Baisley stated that Dr. Ginsberg is the state Toxicologist and the State of Connecticut has a well-rounded toxicology program that guides public health in human risk assessments of pesticides and other chemicals. The State DEEP website also provides public education about Integrated Pest Management for homeowners and alternatives (organic) for lawn care. Ms. Chiappetta believed that it is important to get more information to the public about the danger of pesticide contamination and well water and asked if the Department could do more to educate the public about the risk. The Director noted that the Laboratory sent out 7,000 State brochures addressing well water and possible contaminants

Chairman Carangelo stated that the Board of Health is preempted by State law from using its power to pass an ordinance to ban the use of pesticides. He did not believe there is enough information about potential health risks of pesticide use and is not appropriate for the Board to pass a Resolution to request that residents voluntarily discontinue the use of pesticides on their property. Mr. Carangelo noted that there are many pros and cons of pesticide use and the EPA and the Connecticut DEEP oversees pesticides and how they are used. He stated that he is strongly in favor of education, but the Board of Health should only pass resolutions when it is necessary.

Mr. Schaffir commended the efforts of Greening Our Children in educating the public about the dangers of pesticides, but noted that an organic program for lawn care would be costly to the homeowner.

Dr. Bronin commended Greening Our Children for their efforts, but noted that the Board of Health is not an advocacy Board. He noted that education is an excellent path to take.

Dr. Ross Cahn also applauded efforts of Greening Our Children to protect the public's health, especially children, but there are a number of Public Acts that regulate the use of pesticides. She noted that she is more concerned about threats of the Zika Virus and the West Nile Virus, especially since the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station confirmed that Greenwich is part of the *Aedes albopictus* habitat, putting residents and visitors in danger of contracting the Zika Virus should the *Aedes albopictus* mosquito begin to carry the virus. Dr. Ross Cahn also noted that the American Academy of Pediatrics and pediatricians educate the public about the health risk associated with pesticides.

Dr. Ailleo stated that a resolution about pesticide use is not necessary and Greening Our Children should partner with other community agencies to get their message out.

Dr. Franco stated that it is clear that pesticides have a negative effect on the human body. There are more and more pesticide use that will affect our children and residents and he is in favor of anything the Board can do to help Greening Our Children further their mission.

Ms. Chiappetta believes that the environment is extremely toxic and the Board should state publicly that it is in favor of the work that Greening Our Children is doing.

Director Baisley stated that there are many points of view about pesticide use. For example, the Lyme Research Alliance (Time for Lyme) advocates for protection against Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases which involves residents spraying for ticks on their property.

Ms. Bergstein, co-chair of Greening Our Children, asked for cooperation in educating the public. Chairman noted that the Board is in favor of their hard work.

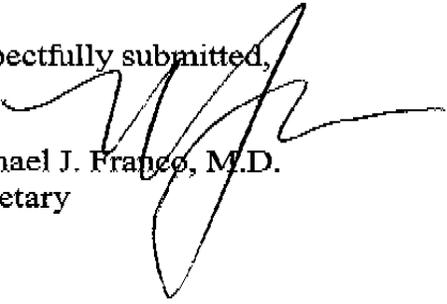
OTHER BUSINESS

Zika Task Force: Chairman announced that at the request of the State Commissioner of Health, the First Selectman will establish a Zika Task Force to formulate a mosquito habitat modification program. Director Baisley will head the Task Force along with Michael Long, Director of Environmental Services, Joanna Lipson, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Dr. Marilyn Ross Cahn, Vice Chair, Board of Health who will be on the Task Force.

New Board Members: Chairman announced that the RTM will vote on the appointment of two new Board members at its June 13, 2016 meeting.

There being no further regular business, Dr. Bronin moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:27 PM.
(Motion: Bronin / Second: Franco /Vote: Unanimous - 7 in favor - 0 opposed)

Respectfully submitted,


Michael J. Franco, M.D.
Secretary