



PRINCETON BOARD OF HEALTH

Monthly Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2021

Zoom Meeting * Princeton, NJ 08540

Board Members – Present

George DiFerdinando, Jr. MD, MPH

Meredith Hodach–Avalos, MD, MPH Kathleen Stillo, MBA

Mona Shah, PhD

Derrell Penn

Joanne Hill, BSN, RN

Leticia Fraga, Council Liaison

Linda Schwimmer, JD

Rick Weiss, MS

Rick Strauss, MD

Staff

Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, HO, REHS

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos, called the Regular meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. She recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: *“This is to affirm that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Princeton Board of Health have been duly advertised and are being conducted in compliance with all provision of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”*

Roll Call was completed.

Minutes:

Ms. Karen Zemle was announced as a guest speaker. Karen is a part of the path of sustainable landscaping. She is a lawyer under Princeton environmental commission.

PEC Recommendations:

Ms. Karen Zemle spoke on behalf of PEC. They recommend “amendments to existing ordinances ASAP to reduce the noise and gas pollution caused by gas leaf blowers, lawn mowers, and chainsaws. This is the first step on the Path to Sustainable Landscaping”.

Ms. Karen Zemle explained to the group the implications of gas leaf blowers on population health. She noted how the request for restricting gas leaf blowing equipment was made almost 24 years ago but ultimately was denied. The concern has been across multiple different groups such as Sustainable Princeton. Ultimately the goal is to address the noise pollution while creating a safer landscaping environment. Ms. Karen Zemle presented changes to the following ordinances: T10-C3(b), T10-C4, B21-2(p), B21-2(q), T19-1A, B1 Sections 1-6.

Board Discussion of PEC Recommendations:

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos opened the floor for discussion or questions from board members. Ms. Christine Symington noted that Mr. Rick Strauss has been the BOH member serving on the steering committee for the PEC project. She also noted that part of the project has already been in the works to transfer to sustainable landscaping including opportunities for community input. Ms. Kathleen Stillo asked what communication with landscapers has looked like and how new policies would be enforced. Mr. Jeffrey Grosser noted how budget changes would be necessary to implement this and additionally how the utilization of Access Princeton would be a useful mechanism. Ms. Christine Symington noted how various meetings have been held with landscape business owners as well as employees to give an equal opportunity for input both in person and online. Councilwoman Leticia Fraga asked how many participants there were in their meetings. Ms. Christine Symington said at the most 13 attendees with a variety of owners and crew. It was asked what the action item for this discussion would be. Dr. George DiFerdinando suggested that the action would be their continued support for the progress on this issues. Ms. Karen Zemle advised that these changes would apply to everyone including the municipality and



the school. Lastly on this issue it was discussed how changes to these policies may affect health equity. While it was noted that the racial equity toolkit would be used, there would need to be further evaluation once these changes were in place. Further information such as the updated presentation, consultant discussion, and other resources were requested.

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos shared the letter of proposal for the project including the need for further evaluation once the project is in place. She asked for comments and suggestions, and health equity specifically was added to the proposal.

Minutes:

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos motioned to vote to support the letter from the Board of Health. Proposal was approved and it will be send to council.

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos motioned to approve the minutes from the BOH meeting on May 11, 2021. Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos made a correction and then it was moved to approve the minutes.

Monthly Report:

Mr. Jeffrey Grosser gave a report on the current status of COVID-19 in Princeton, NJ. Princeton has had two cases within the last two weeks after four consecutive weeks with 0 COVID-19 cases. Mr. Jeffrey Grosser mentioned the clinics that Princeton Health Department had the last few weeks including their last second dose PSRC clinic YMCA clinic and a clinic at La Lupita Grocery. Mr. Jeffrey Grosser commended Princeton High School nurse Ms. Lisa Goldsmith for assisting in the YMCA clinic on last minute notice. Princeton Health Department will be having more neighborhood based clinics going forward. Mr. Jeffrey Grosser commended multiple staff and community members for their assistance during these clinics and for the clinics going forward. Mr. Jeffrey Grosser noted an upcoming clinic at La Mexicana from 6-9 pm. It was also noted how community support has made these clinics so successful. Princeton Health Department has two Spanish speaking employees and is hopeful for another once upon hiring their COVID-19 generalist who will start July 1, 2021. The Princeton Health Department is evaluating their vaccine distribution for the Princeton community based on vaccination data.

Princeton Health Department has seen an increase in nuisance complaints such as trash, grass, etc., and health department staff have been working through those. Princeton Health Department will have an article presented at the American Public Health Association annual conference next October based on persistent racism and the role of local health departments.

Mr. Jeffrey Grosser was asked if the new cases were related, which they were identified as not. It was noted how Governor Murphy ended the public health emergency.

Old Business

No discussion was held.

New Business

Through the American rescue plan, Princeton was awarded six million dollars for COVID-19 resources. Three million has already gone towards infrastructure project. The other three million will go towards a proposal for what has worked and what has not during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parts of the proposal included the expansion of programs and services with a focus on an adult health clinic with a patient centered medical home. This is something already seen for children in the area. An adult clinic for Princeton residents would help provide medical care to those without medical insurance who would not otherwise see a doctor. Additionally, it is proposed that this funding would extend to



continue the Vulnerable Population Outreach Coordinator which is currently funded by New Jersey Department of Health. This role would continue working with vulnerable populations while also taking on a more health educator role. The biggest decision during the pandemic was making the public health nurse full time. The expansion will also give her relief during these clinics. The presentation on this issue will be forwarded out next week. Mr. Jeffrey Grosser clarified that this will be presented in July for final approval.

Liaison Report

No discussion was held.

Reports from Committees

Mr. Darrell Penn presented on the resolution for the structural racism subcommittee. Councilwoman Leticia Fraga noted how the proposal looks good there will just need some further information on specific actions from the task force. There is still moving parts of this project due to input from other organizations. The earliest opportunity to present this resolution would be in July because of the agendas for council meetings right now. Once feedback is given, it will be brought to the board of health again for approval.

Planning Committee:

No discussion was held.

Reports from other Boards/Commissions/Task Forces

Ms. Kathleen Stillo presented for the cannabis Task Force. The subcommittee is working to outline restrictions in the case they decide to opt in for distribution in retail. As the state guidelines are still unclear, it will be a work in process until the time to opt in or opt out. Councilwoman Leticia Fraga added that members of the public have expressed concern of opting out of the program. August 21st, 2021 is the deadline for the opt out option.

Minutes:

Dr. George DiFerdinando discussed how the Princeton Emergency Management group had their final meeting this past week. Dr. George DiFerdinando also said how masks will probably still be worn through the fall.

Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos gave a brief report from a Human Services meeting she attended. She noted the needs assessment that Human Services presented. Councilwoman Leticia Fraga added that this emphasizes where services may lack. This will be shared with the group. Chair Meredith Hodach–Avalos also noted the food services were noted on by Human Services additionally that Human Services would like to work more closely with the Board of Health.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 9:14 p.m. was moved by Dr. George DiFerdinando seconded by Mr. Darrell Penn and affirmatively carried by all those present.