

Minutes of the Meeting of the Rocky Hill Board of Health
March 4, 2008

Members Present: Susan Fisher VMD, Lisbeth Haines MD,
Beverly Poelstra MD, Margaret Querec MSN RN
South Brunswick Liaison: Stephen Papenberg
Borough Council Liaison: Linda Goldman
Excused: Mary Germain EdD APRN-BC FNAP

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:35 pm by Dr. Haines pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Public notice was posted on 1/09/08 and filed with borough clerk. 2/18/08.

2. Review of Minutes

Minutes from 2/12/08 meeting were not reviewed as Dr Germain was not able to be present. Will be deferred until next meeting.

3. Report of South Brunswick Health Officer

a. Animal census – Montgomery Township has an animal control officer who obtains census information when he is in the field. Another method used by some municipalities is having school crossing guards compile the information, as they are familiar with neighborhoods. CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Team) may be used in order to familiarize themselves with the neighborhoods. South Brunswick, Hillsborough, and the county all have CERT teams. Rocky Hill might consider developing this.

Other possibilities suggested were the efforts of Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts either as volunteers or in order to raise funds for their organizations. However, in the interests of safety it was generally felt that an adult should be performing this survey.

This task has been previously performed by constables.

Census will ideally be accomplished in late spring, early summer.

b. Rabies clinic --Last year held on April 19th. 2008 clinic not scheduled yet but likely occur mid April and will coincide with dog and cat license renewals.

c. Local Health Evaluation Report (LHER) —being compiled by Mr. Papenberg. When completed in April he will present to board.

d. Governmental Public Health Partnership (GPHP) – meeting on Friday 3/7. Will discuss next steps in CHIP process (Community Health Improvement Plan.)

4. Old business

a. Consolidation of Health Departments - still working on budgets, awaiting word from Governor Corzine re: funding on various programs.

b. Municipal Alliance Update – no news due to timing of BOH meeting. Next municipal alliance meeting is 3/10/08 and will be attended by Dr. Poelstra.

c. Preschool Sandbox Cover – no further action taken, will attempt to create a sign to encourage the cover to be replaced to discourage use by wild animals as litter box.

5. New business

None

6. BOH Plan for 07-08

a. Communication – will revisit later in meeting

New suggestions --Press releases announce to website and also rabies clinic in

Montgomery News. (The rabies clinic free to all state residents. Likewise, Rocky Hill residents may attend a clinic in other towns. It is suggested to call ahead to insure that vaccine is available.)

Item for this month – rabies clinic possible date April 19th

b. Prevention – accidents, healthy lifestyles

1. Sidewalk Lighting Update -- Dr. Haines spoke with Mayor Zimmerman. He will survey the location of lights around town to determine needs.

2. Van Horne Park Update – In the interest of promoting healthy lifestyles, working people want to use facilities before or after work.. However, it would involve changing the Borough Ordinance to amend park hours from the current times of from dawn to dusk. Montgomery Ordinance reads an hour before sunrise to one hour after dark RHBOH will endorse any change in the ordinance to encourage citizens to use their parks for exercise.

3. Small animal control contact – update by Mr. Papenberg. South Brunswick is pursuing sharing services with other towns.

4. Update animal ordinances –BOH will make recommendations to Council regarding increasing fees and changing license renewal dates. Borough attorney will put into the proper language. Ordinance 2-90 dogs, 2-92 cats.

The specific language for licensing cats by age is mandated by the State of New Jersey. Licensing age is fixed by the state.

Dr. Haines performed an informal survey of fees charged by nearby municipalities. Rocky Hill current fees are:

Dogs \$5.00 basic fee, non-neutering fee \$4.00 additional

Cats \$9.00 basic fee, non-neutering fees 4.00 additional

Fees charged by other towns range from \$5-22 with \$3 non neutering fee plus late fees.

Many towns do not require licensing of cats. All towns mandate rabies vaccination. Dr. Haines performed a Revenue Analysis and determined that we lose money on licensing now – annual deficit is currently estimated at \$300. Proposed fees are based on costs to borough including tags, printing, paper, mailing reminders in December or January, census, vet fees for rabies clinics, and software purchase for monitoring. Donna Griffiths found the proposed software to be acceptable. She will transfer pet licensing information to data bases. All tax payers will be included, however this leaves out tenants. Program will preprint parts of the application.

Proposed fees \$12 basic fee for dogs and cats with 4.00 non-neutered fee. Changes in fees will be suggested to town council.

Dr Fisher suggested making provisions for hardship cases, senior citizen discount. The main purpose of animal licenses is to assure that animals are vaccinated against rabies. Since this is a local ordinance, we may provide an exemption.

It was suggested that we transition to the database as soon as possible, since there is currently no mechanism to cross-index information using the paper licensing forms.

Late fees suggested: as of 1/09 \$20 first quarter, \$5 per quarter thereafter

BOH favors instituting increased fees now, and instituting late fees next year after the reminders are sent out. Mr Uhrik will coordinate this with Donna Griffiths

A motion to recommend to the Borough Council the fees mentioned above made by Mrs. Querec. seconded by Dr. Poelstra. All in favor.

5. Influenza – no new news

c. Preparedness/accidents

1. Pending installation of signage clarifying various locations in Van Horne park, was mentioned in Montgomery news. As well, Pooper Scooper laws to be enforced. Dogs must

be on leash. There is no place in town where animals are permitted to run free.

2. Community Survey Update - last performed in Dec 05 – summer 06. 106 responses, 10 families in fair or poor health. One insulin dependent diabetic child. BOH to develop a strategy for updating or to assess the need for updating this document. Rescue squad members were involved in the obtaining last survey, however, many members do not live in Rocky Hill and already donate an enormous amount of their time. Currently we have no strategy for updating this. It is not currently being used by our rescue squad. The County is working on developing a special needs registry as part of the flu pandemic preparedness, so perhaps this will suffice. The current planner recently left his position and state did not refund the position. There is already a statewide registry for dialysis patients, so it would be helpful to incorporate this information.

Alan Querec is the Emergency Management Coordinator for Rocky Hill and is in charge of local emergency planning in the event of severe weather, power outages, etc. Proposing timelines for revamping this item early fall.

d. Communication

Website being designed by Dr. Fisher who presented her work to date. Software purchased from Netfirms. Comparison was made with Middle-brook Regional Health Commission and Somerset County Health Department websites for ideas as far as design and content.

Basic site plan reviewed. Layout begun by Dr. Fisher. She has provided pages that have our mission statement, basic information on rabies, etc. and hopefully links to more in depth information. Home page intended to be eye-catching and draw in residents to get them to explore our website. She has set up site so that there are various levels of exploring. More information provided at deeper levels. Dr. Fisher suggested quick links on first page for licensing and other hot topics. She would like assistance in developing more content and input on quick links.

Suggested topics – clinic information, current health alerts leading into current news page. Dr Haines provided suggestions for subtopics -- Smoking cessation, 211, hyperlinks instead of icons, link to Somerset County website, link from Rocky Hill website. BOH website will have email capabilities so that we may answer queries from the public and a guest book where visitors can sign in and leave comments. We do not need to have all pages completed to publish this and put it on line. Can select only the finished pages.

e. Timelines

1. Website -- proposed to launch it June or earlier with the basics.
2. Pet licensing ordinance – end of March. Must complete attorney review, introduce ordinance at council, public hearing (must be announced) BOH member to be present to council to answer questions, then vote of Borough Council and finally adoption of the ordinance. (?end of May) Cannot purchase software until ordinance is passed.
3. Pet Survey -- no date
4. Individual Emergency Plan - will revisit in the fall
5. Pandemic flu plan -- no date

Dr. Haines will not be available to chair the next BOH meeting. The membership decided to keep the meeting as scheduled for April 8th. Dr. Poelstra will preside in her absence.

Motion made to adjourn by Mrs Querec, seconded by Dr. Fisher. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly A. Poelstra MD