

## HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2012

**Members Present:** Lindle Willnow, Susan Wilfahrt and Karen Zagorski, members. Health Agent Leslie Whelan, BOH Administrative Assistant Nancy Stevens, and Gerry Donnellan, Wenham Board of Health chair also present.

**Meeting Opened:** Lindle Willnow called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at Hamilton Town Hall

### **Discussion – Mosquito/EEE Update – Resident Complaints and Degree of Toxicity of Spraying**

Lindle Willnow addressed the ban on outdoor activity relative to whether or not the threat level of mosquitoes carrying Eastern Equine Encephalitis still exists. He noted that on the Department of Public Health website outdoor temperatures had to be 28 degrees or lower for two hours for the ban to be lifted. On October 13<sup>th</sup> temperatures dropped below freezing but not to 28 degrees and the National Weather Service indicated that was a hard freeze. Willnow said there is differing opinion as to whether or not a hard freeze occurred. In further discussion with the state DPH, the primary threat is from Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Also, given it is later in the season it is less likely to get EEE bearing mosquitoes present due to their lifecycle.

Willnow moved effective immediately the Hamilton Board of Health is lifting the ban on all organized outdoor activities between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. However, because the threat level still exists and mosquito activity is still possible, the Board of Health recommends avoiding all organized outdoor activities during these hours. The Board of Health strongly urges use of extreme precautions for anyone going outside at those times until temperatures fall to 28 degrees or below for at least two hours. Karen Zagorski seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Willnow emphasized that mandatory ban is no longer in place but it is strongly recommended that residents take extreme precautions if they do go out especially citizens being active next Wednesday.

Gerry Donnellan, Wenham Board of Health chair, noted that general consensus from health representatives who attended a recent Emergency Preparedness meeting was that there had been a rush to judgment to lift the ban using federal information. Discussion ensued where Willnow described information from National Weather Service's interpretation of a hard freeze temperature and that the towns of Hamilton and Wenham officials agreed that there are conflicting definitions.

Donnellan noted that he had a discussion with Wenham soccer coach who is very aware of situation. Willnow mentioned that he had seen mosquitoes since October 13<sup>th</sup>. Also, that DPH has said the EEE bearing mosquito population is likely to be greatly reduced and that Jack Card from the Mosquito Control District has said the EEE bearing mosquitoes do not go inside and that West Nile Virus bearing mosquitoes do go inside and can survive. Willnow reiterated that the greatest current threat is from EEE bearing mosquitoes.

Discussion ensued about how to notify the public about the lifting of the ban on organized outdoor activities and health officials agreed to discuss with Town Manager Michael Lombardo if a Connect CTY message is needed, that HW Recreation Director Sean Timmons would be contacted and that BOH Administrative Assistant Nancy Stevens would contact HWRSD. Donnellan said he would inform Wenham officials about Hamilton Board of Health decision to lift ban.

Willnow then opened the discussion regarding concerns related to efficacy of spraying. Michael Madden, Highland Street, noted he was an organic gardener and expressed his concern about the chemicals used for spraying, especially potential impact on his family with young children, and he thought the chemicals could be more toxic than the perceived risk of EEE or WNV. Willnow said the risk is definite since horses and humans have contracted disease and died and there is an expensive cost associated with treating those with the disease.

He suggested the Board would review over the winter the long term effects of spraying chemicals for mosquito control. Susan Wilfahrt mentioned that she thought studies on the effects of spraying these chemicals are scarce. Willnow concurred and thought the scope of studies available would be limited. Madden had researched a website about how the chemicals are said to kill insects other than mosquitoes and aquatic life. He cited his own asthmatic symptoms but acknowledged they might not be a direct result of the spraying.

Discussion ensued with Madden about his option to opt out of having his property sprayed by the Mosquito Control District. Additional discussion included that the spray does not travel very far and that the Board of Health is following the Town Meeting vote to be a participating community in the Mosquito Control District. Wilfahrt noted that if there would be consideration not to spray for mosquitoes the decision would have to be based on Town-wide sentiment. Madden said he did opt out of spraying.

Willnow spoke to the risk of chemical exposure and noted the extreme precautions the Board recommends for preventing mosquito bites is to minimize skin exposure and use of mosquito repellent that includes DEET and the best precaution was not to go outside from 5 p.m. until 8 a.m. He noted that the state understands there are conflicting reports about what constitutes a hard freeze and that DPH plans to refine its definition. Donnellan mentions that DPH does not have a specific definition of hard freeze. Willnow said an ice layer forming on standing water is relative indicator of hard freeze.

In response to Madden who raised his concern about impact of chemical spraying on Town's children, Willnow reiterated that the BOH would be reviewing this in the winter months, the Board's interest in carrying out the Town Meeting vote for mosquito control and the balance of risks involved.

### **Discussion – Health Implications of Bi-Weekly Trash Pick-up Follow-up**

Willnow suggested the Board table this until next month since there is a need for further research and Board has been focusing on the mosquito issue. He noted that as the winter gets colder, there would be less fly larva problems related to trash pick-up.

### **Board Signature – Title 5 Supplement Regulation**

The Board signed the most up-to-date Title 5 Supplement Regulation that included Board amendments to language regarding use of metal covers at grade.

### **Review – Board of Health Minutes dated September 19 & October 1**

Health Agent Leslie Whelan and Board provided amendments to September 19 and October 1, 2012 minutes. Willnow moved they approve the September 19 and October 1, 2012 minutes as amended. Zagorski seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

**Other business**

Board received information on Local Upgrade Approvals for 4 Crescent Road and 75 Old Cart Road but these did not require Board action.

Willnow reiterated that moving forward the Board would research studies on efficacy and risk associated with spraying chemicals for mosquito control and would look into the bi-weekly trash program. He mentioned that there was a study done in 2005 on the impact of EEE and WNV in Massachusetts. Willnow referred to statistics for this year in the state with 7 cases of EEE and 20 cases of WNV. Discussion ensued about larvacide effort done in the spring as likely more effective in reducing mosquito population than spraying insects.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

The Board's next meeting is on Wednesday, December 5, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. Willnow moved at 8:20 p.m. to adjourn. Zagorski seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

**ATTEST:**

cc: Selectmen, Planning Board, Town Clerk, Conservation