

HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2012

Members Present: Lindle Willnow and Karen Zagorski. Health Agent Leslie Whelan also present.

Meeting Opened: Lindle Willnow called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. at Hamilton Town Hall

Discussion – Manhole Cover Regulation

Health Agent Leslie Whelan presented Board with draft language for Manhole Cover Regulation for discussion and recommended at Board's next meeting that there could be a hearing to vote on the language.

Lindle Willnow suggested that if manhole is above grade so no one could step on it and it is bolted, a plastic cover could be used. He mentioned that in situations where the manhole cover is covered with soil it should not be plastic.

Board discussed amendments to Whelan's draft regulation language. Willnow agreed to investigate if there are ASTM standards for manhole covers via online subscription service available through his work.

Discussion ensued on below grade covers being concrete or cast iron with both being subject to corrosion. Also considered is if nine inches of soil over the cover is adequate as a minimum depth. Whelan agreed to investigate if concrete covers that come with septic tanks typically used in Town are reinforced with wire mesh.

In addition, Willnow recommended inside lip of manhole cover should be ½ inch less in diameter than the manhole cover (he suggested this dimension be investigated) and the vertical lip should be tall enough to keep the manhole cover horizontally in place. This is so if it flips open it would not fall into tank. Discussion ensued about Title 5 requirements for 24" minimum diameter cover. Also mentioned was weight requirement that manhole cover could support and Board recommended it should be 250 pounds. Whelan will email revised draft regulation to Board members for review. Willnow concurred with Whelan that this regulation is a good idea to put into the Town's bylaw.

Discussion – Policy on use of multi-compartment septic tanks and effluent filters

Whelan referred to a policy put in place before her tenure as health agent that she understands is not a local regulation and she does not have the authority to enforce use of multi-compartment septic tanks and effluent filters.

She asked Board if it wanted to continue this policy and mentioned that as of two years ago she has stopped enforcing the two effluent filters requirement. Whelan described how with the use of two effluent filters, when the first filter clogs, the water level rises and this can back up into the house. With a two-compartment tank and the filter clogs causing the water to rise, it can go up and over the air gap from first tank to the second bringing effluent and scum. The second compartment then gets scum that it would not get with the use of one filter. Therefore, Whelan has been instructing installers not to bother with the first filter so the policy for a middle filter rather than just a final filter is not enforced.

Whelan said there has not been a problem for septic system designers and installers. She reiterated the consequences when the first filter clogs in a two-compartment tank. In response to Willnow, she said Title 5 requires two filters when there is a pump in the septic tank. She noted if the local regulation did not require filters, there would not be the requirement for covers to grade. Discussion ensued about how filters can be cleaned with Whelan noting that tanks should be pumped before unclogging filters.

Board clarified that this is a policy not a bylaw. In response to Willnow, Whelan opined that the Board did not have to vote to remove the middle filter rather she could revise the policy in such a way that reflects the Board discussion so it is amended to eliminate the first filter but keep requirement for two-compartment septic tanks.

Willnow mentioned that the two tank covers to grade provide access to each compartment but now there is no second filter. Whelan noted that she had been requiring the covers to grade over the filters because this is a DEP and Title 5 requirement. Discussion was on three covers typically found with septic tanks used currently but that the access to grade would be related to location of filter.

Discussion ensued on homeowner education material related to septic system filters where Whelan will check with DEP to understand what is available, and she suggested that filter manufacturers could have information. She noted that

according to Title 5 requirements, if there is a filter the septic tank manhole cover is supposed to be labeled with information about it. Whelan agreed to investigate where covers labeled with filter information could be found to recommend for installer use.

Discussion – Possible Health Implications of Bi-Weekly Trash Pick-up

Willnow addressed his personal experience that has been substantiated by others he has spoken to that there are a lot of maggots in organic waste and solid waste trash cans and compost heaps and whether or not this a problem for spreading disease. He noted that this is more prevalent when the weather is hot.

Whelan noted that when she studied environmental health there was an explanation for trash pickup once a week based on the lifecycle of flies. Discussion ensued about how Hamilton residents can purchase blue bags to put solid waste trash out on the off-week that their neighborhoods get solid waste pickup in the black barrels. Whelan said she did not know the diseases that are spread from flies but she agreed that the maggots are considered a public health nuisance.

Willnow offered to investigate and draft a letter that could be given to the Board of Selectmen regarding consideration of going back to weekly solid waste pickup in the black barrels. Discussion ensued about adding dry yard waste (leaves or grass) to compost bins to balance out food scraps. Also, that some residents have experienced when their compost barrels are completely full they have not been emptied by waste hauler. In addition, how the Town previously had compost bins for sale as supplied by DEP. Willnow reiterated that he would work on draft language and have it ready for Board review at its next meeting.

Discussion – Conflict of Interest Training

Willnow explained that the Board needed to complete the Conflict of Interest training (a multiple-choice quiz found online) and sign certification form that could be scanned and converted to PDF to email to Town Clerk Jane Wetson. Whelan noted that she and BOH Administrative Assistant Nancy Stevens had completed certification.

Review – Board of Health Minutes dated 5/23/2012

Board and Whelan reviewed and provided amendments to Board's May 23, 2012 meeting minutes. Discussion ensued about whether or not Echo Cove Road property has an apartment or not since the property is for sale. Willnow asked Whelan and Stevens to check with Deb Paskowski of Hamilton's building department.

Willnow moved that the Board accept the May 23, 2012 meeting minutes as amended. Karen Zagorski seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Other business

Whelan requested on behalf of Stevens if the Board would consider adjusting its meeting start time from 7:30 to 7 p.m. Willnow suggested the next meeting be tentatively scheduled for 7 p.m. and asked that Stevens check with Susan Wilfahrt on adjusted start time.

Meeting Adjourned:

Zagorski moved at 8:40 p.m. to adjourn. Willnow seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous. The Board's next meeting is on Wednesday, September 19 at 7:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

cc: Selectmen, Planning Board, Town Clerk, Conservation