

**Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2012**

Members Present:

Tom Kinzer, Co-Chair
Bea Brunkhorst, Co-Chair,
Sarah Thompson
Kevin Wormstead

Members Absent:

Anita Raj

Staff Present:

Heidi Porter, Director
Mary Firestone, Recording Secretary

Also Attending:

Residents (the two adult children), 2 Sunnyfield Road
Jeff Cohen, Planning Board Liaison

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M. Mr. Kinzer chaired.

Hearing – Outstanding Sanitary Code Violations

Mr. Wormstead moved to open the hearing; Ms. Thompson seconded the motion. Vote: Mr. Kinzer: Yea; Dr. Brunkhorst: Yea; Ms. Thompson: Yea; Mr. Wormstead: Yea. Vote count: 4-0

Mr. Kinzer explained the hearing process: the purpose of the hearing is for the Board of Health (Board) to gather information; the Board may or may not discuss the issues at this meeting. Residents of 2 Sunnyfield Road were present for the hearing. Mr. Kinzer asked Ms. Porter to explain the reasons for the hearing.

Ms. Porter said that she had been referred to the residence at 2 Sunnyfield Road by the Police Department and the Fire Department. An elderly couple and their two adult children reside at this address. The concerns are the problem of egress from the unit and the accumulation of household items. She sent a letter to the residents requesting access to the residence for an inspection and to discuss mitigation options. She was granted an inspection, and on April 5, 2012, she went with others from the town (Wendy Aronson from the Council on Aging, Acting Captain Charles Stone of the Bedford Fire Department, and Jonathan Beckley of Minuteman Senior Services) as a team to evaluate the situation. Ms. Porter was granted access to the residence, and her evaluation is that the unit is in an unsanitary condition. Mitigation is needed of the extreme accumulation of materials, and Ms. Porter issued an order letter to the owners stating that removal of materials within 30-days is required to ensure a safe and sanitary environment. Ms. Aronson and Mr. Beckley were able to coordinate the hiring of cleanup contractors to assist the owners. There is reduced access due to the accumulated materials. Ms. Porter noted that town staff had previous contact with these residents on the exact same issue in 2008.

During the month of May 2012, appointments with the remediation contractor were made and cancelled; the contractor was there on June 1 but not a lot was accomplished. A conversation with the mother revealed a resistance to letting things go. Clearly, resolution of the problem is beyond the capacity of the senior residents. Given that the 30-day window for cleanup had passed, Ms. Porter looks to the Board for a decision on how to proceed. The possible ultimate recourse would be a court filing. The Police Department has also considered a court filing. Minuteman Senior Services is reluctant to release additional funds. Ms. Porter said that the town wants people to stay in their houses.

Mr. Kinzer asked the son how he would characterize the materials in the house, and he responded that the materials included clothing from deceased relatives, articles on health issues, and newspapers that are a year or two old. He said that he worked with the contractor on Friday. The daughter said that the

material included old bank statements; she said that clothing needs to be donated away. Mr. Kinzer asked how much of the clothing fits the residents. The son said that not much is known; he added that there is a lot of camping equipment and that cellar flooding caused problems.

Ms. Thompson asked the owners, "Do you recognize the problem?" The son said, "Yes". He added that he realized that the materials must be parted with, but cited the reluctance of their mother. The daughter asked, "Is there such a thing as a hoarding psychiatrist?" Ms. Thompson asked, "How did 2008 go?" The son said that it went well --- stuff was off the counter, etc. Ms. Porter said that some of the items ended up in the garage; there is a concern from the Fire Department about fire load due to the volume of materials present. Mr. Wormstead spoke of a previous case in which a fire resulted. Ms. Porter said that when she visited today (the date of this hearing) she found an accumulation on the stove, including a napkin near a burner. The son said that if he or his sister sees paper or plastic near the stove or in the oven, they remove it. Ms. Porter said that having nothing on the stove is best. The son said that the two burners on the left side don't work. He said that when a person sent by Minuteman Senior Services was helping her mother in the bathroom, remarks were made that it was too crowded. Ms. Porter said that the home is navigated by pathways through the materials. The son said that they need to get someone to bathe their mother.

Ms. Porter said that they need a team and a dumpster; materials have to be allowed to leave the house. Dr. Brunkhorst said that mental health may be an issue. Ms. Porter said that Minuteman Senior Services may provide help; she said that mental health services must be accepted. The Council on Aging is willing to release \$1,000 which would provide a day for men, a van, and a dumpster. The son said that there is a financial issue; he is unemployed, and his sister is on Social Security Disability. Also, he needs to renew his ability to administer his father's Social Security funds and needs coaching on the Social Security process. Ms. Porter said that the Council on Aging would help with that. Mr. Wormstead said that he has experience with the Social Security forms, which he has filled out for his own family member.

Ms. Thompson asked, "Is your mother of sound mind? Will she consent to the cleanout? Would it be easier if she's not home?" The son recounted an incident with an icon received from Regis College and his mother's insistence on keeping the materials that came with it.

Mr. Kinzer said, "This is serious business. We do need this done. We are not in a hurry to go to court, but we need to see progress." He said that this is a delicate situation; it might be easier to start with categories, such as clothing: see if it fits and is useable.

Mr. Wormstead said that a lot of material can be recycled. As an example, he said that when his tenant died, he learned that a Veterans' organization will pick things up. Ms. Porter said that the adult daughter committed, in her mother's presence, to work on it. Clothing will be put to use by donating it and will not be thrown out, a concern of the mother's.

Dr. Brunkhorst said that they need to get help so that the Board is not back on the issue again in the future. The son said that he needs to go to COA meetings on getting help with the Social Security paperwork. Ms. Thompson said that some long-term planning is needed. Mr. Kinzer said that if the house was cleared in 2008 and more material has come in, someone must be buying it. The son said that some things were not addressed in 2008. Mr. Kinzer asked if their mother is buying items. The son said that their mother buys furniture. Mr. Wormstead said that when something comes in, something needs to go out. Dr. Brunkhorst said that there is a wonderful library in town; they don't need to keep old newspapers, etc.

Mr. Kinzer asked, "What is the immediate next step? We should set a time to review." Ms. Porter said that there are contractors who can work with the family, but only limited funding is available from the COA. The daughter said that she will get paperwork on her income. Ms. Thompson asked, "Are you capable of dealing with it?"

The son referred to the problem with the handrails. Ms. Porter said that there may be a handyman service available. She said that the time limit for correction of the violations outlined in order letter has expired, and if the issue goes to court, the court will require a quick resolution. She advised that they take advantage of available services. She said that she doesn't want to come back in, but a 30-day check-in might be a good option. The son said that it is easy to get overwhelmed. Mr. Wormstead advised getting Houseworks to make a dent and than keeping at it. Ms. Thompson asked whether the daughter is more capable of throwing things out than her brother. Mr. Wormstead said, "You need to make the admission that you need help and accept the help."

Ms. Porter said that in the past month, help was not allowed into the house; there were postponements. The son said that Houseworks only sent one man for 3 hours; that man suggested that two men were needed for 4 hours. Four contractor bags of old mail were removed; he probably took 25% of what was in one room.

Ms. Porter said that the next step is for the COA to consult with Minuteman Senior Services; if progress is seen, more funds may be released. The son said that he needs help on organizing and needs shelving.

Mr. Kinzer asked, "What event do we look forward to in 30 days?" Ms. Porter said that she can do a follow-up inspection and report back. The son said that he needs to have open space. Ms. Porter said, "You're at 9 on the hoarding scale; I want it to be at 4." There followed a discussion of how their father gets up and down stairs. Mr. Wormstead reiterated his concern about fire. Ms. Porter said that she needs to see progress in the basement. The daughter said that they need spare recycling bins. Ms. Porter said that she will speak to Officer Dineen, the Community Liaison Officer.

In a discussion of the son's difficulty in navigating Social Security, Mr. Kinzer said that in his experience the Social Security Office is very efficient. "Go down there," he said, "And they will help you."

Ms. Porter said that on July 9, at 11:00 A.M., she will make a follow-up inspection, focusing on living space. Dr. Brunkhorst moved to direct Ms. Porter to perform the inspection and to look for progress to level 4, with 50% of material removed. Mr. Wormstead seconded the motion. Vote count: 4-0-1. The Board thanked the residents and wished them well.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to close the hearing; Mr. Wormstead seconded the motion. Vote count: 4-0-1.

The daughter said that she wants counseling for her mother. Ms. Porter said that she will explore resources and communicate with her.

Minutes:

Dr. Brunkhorst moved to accept the minutes of the May 7, 2012 meeting as amended; Mr. Wormstead seconded the motion. Vote count: 4-0

Board of Health Action Items --- Old and New Business:

Update on BOH Liaison assignments:

Ms. Porter and Dr. Brunkhorst attended the Becton, Dickenson and Company Institutional Biosafety Committee meeting. Dr. Brunkhorst said that they are doing very simple things. It was a positive meeting. Mr. Kinzer asked, "Where do we stand on changing regulations to cover more than just DNA?" Dr. Brunkhorst said that the Cambridge regulations will be used as a template; a timeline should be considered. Mr. Wormstead said that the regulations should include permitting of laboratory animal facilities and oversight on the lab animals; if any residents are concerned, we will be able to inform them. Dr. Brunkhorst said, "Let's put our heads together; we need to understand what's feasible." Ms. Porter will see to the scheduling of the next visit.

Mr. Wormstead reported on the May 10 meeting of the Youth and Family Services Committee. Sue Baldauf reported that the middle school dance was a success, with 160 attendees. Springs Brook Park will open as scheduled. There are 18 families-in-transition at the Bedford Plaza Hotel. Hanscom Air Force Base will be downsizing Air Force personnel but Coast Guard personnel will be coming in, and the Lincoln Labs facility will be expanding. People were glad to hear that the tobacco regulations were passed.

Mr. Kinzer went to the second Comprehensive Plan meeting; he wants to give his report at the next Board meeting after the minutes of the breakout groups become available. Healthy Environment concerns were mentioned.

Mr. Kinzer commented that the hearing had been untypical and painful. Ms. Porter said that there should be a task force in the town; while she and the Board are tasked with enforcing the Sanitary Code, there must be mental health and organizational resources and personnel available to assist people with correcting these situations. The Board's summer intern, Mary Kalmanovich, is developing a protocol for such a task force. Ms. Thompson said that the Board can't solve the problem, just make the house safe. Mr. Kinzer said, "Even less would a court order help." Ms. Porter said that when the Board signs off that identified Sanitary Code violations have been corrected, the case is closed from a regulatory perspective, but there are many social and mental health issues that may still need to be addressed. Mr. Cohen said that such services are to be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Porter said that she hesitates to call it a Hoarding Task Force but perhaps something more palatable and encompassing of other housing or socioeconomic issues that may arise. She cannot just enter a home on the coattails of the police or fire personnel. She must write a letter or contact the owner or occupant by phone and hope to be invited in. No one has to accept services.

Director's Report:

Regarding the request for a plumbing variance at the new dairy facility on Concord Road, the Board has to petition the state plumbing board for the variance.

Entegris is moving their operation to Crosby Drive. Because of contamination with chlorinated solvents in the area, the company is requesting to have interior, overhead piping so that they don't need to put the drain lines under the building and then dig it all up if a problem develops. Ms. Porter will ask the Bedford plumbing inspector for his opinion on the proposal. She asked the Board whether she should issue a petition contingent on emergency back-up power. Board members agreed that she should.

Ms. Porter is awaiting resumes of applicants for the Community Health Nurse position.

Ms. Porter reported that a grant had been received to hold table-top exercises on emergency sheltering.

Ms. Porter said that Springs Brook Park will open, and planning for next year is underway.

Ms. Porter said that Bedford Board of Health will partner with area Health Departments on a \$50,000 grant application to State Farm Insurance to build a self-reporting database of Individuals Requiring Additional Assistance (IRAAs) in our communities.

Ms. Porter was informed by Navy representatives that they are concerned that access to NWIRP remedial operations may be hampered due to proposed private recreational development on leased Massport land where they have an easement.

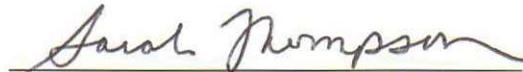
Dr. Brunkhorst suggested that everyone go to the town website and fill out the questionnaire on transportation needs. She thanked Mr. Cohen for attending the meeting.

Mr. Wormstead moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Thompson seconded the motion. Vote count: 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Future meetings of the Board will take place on July 23 and September 10, 2012.



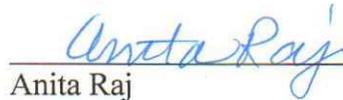
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