

HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2012

Members Present: Lindle Willnow, Susan Wilfahrt and Karen Zagorski. Health Agent Leslie Whelan, BOH Administrative Assistant Nancy Stevens, Public Health Nurse Kim Paskalis, and Town Manager Michael Lombardo also present.

Meeting Opened: Lindle Willnow called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. at Hamilton Town Hall

Discussion – Mosquito Problems – Board of Health actions taken and if any other action should be taken regarding West Nile Virus found in Topsfield

Five residents from area recently sprayed were in attendance.

Health Agent Leslie Whelan reported that the Town had received a call from Department of Public Health on Friday afternoon giving advanced warning that Eastern Equine Encephalitis was found in one of the mosquito samples collected in Hamilton and that information would be forthcoming from the Mosquito Control District (MCD) about where the sample was located. So Whelan scheduled a meeting for Board of Health discussion.

Whelan spoke with MCD on Saturday about its educated guess that the EEE mosquito was found in the Chebacco area. This was confirmed on Monday by DPH. She said MCD had recommended spraying be done in Hamilton as soon as possible so she contacted Town officials about taking this action before the Board of Health meeting and they concurred it was worthwhile spraying ASAP.

Hamilton was then notified that mosquito carrying West Nile Virus was collected in Topsfield on Perkins Row, which is nearby Hamilton town line. Whelan noted that this was a secondary concern for Hamilton to be addressed at this meeting and that Wenham, Topsfield and Ipswich had sprayed. WNV has not been identified in Wenham this year.

Discussion ensued about the EEE mosquito found in the Chebacco area being mammal biting. However, Whelan said DPH has not raised the risk level from low. She explained that MCD through spraying works to decrease the number of mosquitoes so EEE does not spread. She added that the Town wanted to follow

MCD's advice to reduce number of mosquitoes with EEE using minimal spraying proactively to attempt to avoid the need for spraying the entire Town or for repeated spraying.

In response to Willnow, Whelan said no further results have been received on the mosquito samples in Hamilton. They are collected on Mondays and Wednesdays and results are provided on Fridays. She did not know if this same collection process and schedule is used for other communities. Town Manager Michael Lombardo mentioned that two other towns he spoke to also tested twice a week.

Whelan said MCD collects mosquitoes in two areas in Town with three types of traps that capture different species and some use CO₂ to simulate people. She added that MCD does not want trap locations known for safety reasons.

Discussion ensued about Hamilton budgeting \$40,000 annually for mosquito testing and control. In response to resident, Willnow said the Town's participation in MCD enables it to be notified when mosquitoes with EEE or WNV are found and be involved in spraying decision. Lombardo noted that the state agency has a broad authority to act in these circumstances although it has been cooperative with Town.

In response to resident that asked what would occur if there was an outbreak, Lombardo thought MCD could answer that relative to threat risk and he noted MCD was deferring to the local issues. Resident cited conversation with MCD's Jack Card who had said that aerial spraying would occur if necessary.

Discussion ensued about if Board of Health had researched chemicals to be used by MCD before spraying had occurred. Whelan explained that MCD had said the chemical it uses breaks down readily into non-toxic components from sun and moisture so they could not identify half-life. It is only effective when it is aerosolized and can spread under optimum conditions for 300 feet. When it falls it is no longer effective in killing mosquitoes, if it lands on surface of water and fish ingest it could be detrimental. But she said because it doesn't persist it is not very toxic.

Resident asked Board of Health to do more research since she would like to trust the actions taken on mosquito spraying. Discussion ensued about resident conversation with Card relative to how ground-based spraying is done and how far past the roadside the spray travels and its overall effectiveness. Willnow said the spraying process is done where mosquito populations are located and he

advocated for some action. Resident noted that Manchester had decided not to spray and she questioned legality of spraying at wetlands. She noted that Card had assured her that spraying in watershed and wetlands in Hamilton would not occur. She inquired as to why Hamilton's Conservation Commission had not been involved in spraying decision and research done on chemicals and effect on wetlands.

Discussion ensued about her submitting a request to the Town that her land not be sprayed and she had not received any confirmation from Hamilton officials. Lombardo said he thought that process to submit such requests had been publicized in local press and that plans are in the works to revamp Town website to integrate social media as a method of communicating to public beyond Connect CTY call made to households about spraying schedule.

Public Health Nurse Kim Paskalis reiterated that mosquito samples are counted and if mosquitoes carrying disease are identified then minimal spraying is done. Discussion ensued about risks of bird biting versus human biting mosquitoes and how spraying is done at night as a way to minimize impact on bee population. Also noted was that aerial spraying is intended to be avoided and that nuisance mosquitoes are found in wet, wooded areas.

Residents expressed concern about risk versus benefit of roadside spraying relative to potential lack of impact with acres of woods nearby and outcome of chemical in environment years from now. Willnow noted the importance of personal protection against mosquitoes including use of bug sprays. He added that MCD uses larvacide in the Town's catch basins in the spring.

Discussion ensued about need for Board of Health to make active decisions since there are instances when it could not wait for a Town Meeting decision on whether or not to spray for mosquitoes when insects carrying disease are identified in Hamilton. The Board's fluidity to make key decisions is tied into engaging citizenry through communicating via Connect CTY system. Lombardo noted that Town is aware of the need to beef up communication with citizenry especially with the Town's website and effort is underway to try and incorporate social media such as Twitter and Facebook as well as to broadcast messages via email and to smart cell phones.

Discussion was on how it has been nine years since Hamilton has sprayed for mosquitoes and that the recent spraying activity was based solely on the infected mosquito being identified in the pool analyzed by MCD with the likelihood there

could be more insects carrying disease. Also addressed was that the process used today for spraying is not the same as what was done in the past for nuisance mosquitoes. Also mentioned were other communities participating in MCD including Manchester, Topsfield and Ipswich and those that are not participants such as Gloucester and Rockport.

Willnow said the Board of Health would take the residents' suggestions under advisement and look into the health effects of the chemicals used for spraying mosquitoes, the legality of spraying, what should the Conservation Commission's involvement be and overall effectiveness of spraying before the next Board meeting on September 19.

Also in response to residents, Town officials said that the Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission had not been involved in the Town's decision about mosquito spraying to date but will be notified. Lombardo and Conservation Commission Coordinator Jim Hankin had fielded calls from residents on the matter.

Discussion ensued with residents about the impact of spraying on well water or the Town's public water supply and any research that may be done. Willnow said the Town supplies residents with bacterial reports related to the public water supply as mandated by the Department of Environmental Protection. In response to the residents who asked that any research results on the environmental impact of chemicals used for mosquito spraying be sent to households, Willnow said the Board of Health would take that under advisement. He added that delivery of this information would be dependant upon economic drivers, and would likely be posted on Hamilton's website where the Board's meeting minutes can also be found.

Discussion then addressed spraying for West Nile Virus found in Topsfield that was done on Monday in that community's northeast quadrant since it was identified on Perkins Row that is on the other side of Ipswich River near Asbury Street in Hamilton.

Whelan described her discussion with Card from MCD about area that would be considered for spraying in Hamilton including Highland Street to Pingree School, and all streets west including Asbury Street to the Town line. This may not hit Winthrop Street. Topsfield sprayed east of Route 1 and north of Route 97 on Monday. Ipswich and Wenham sprayed certain parts of their towns due to the WNV result.

Willnow said he thought the Town should take the same spraying action with WNV as it did with EEE. Discussion ensued about EEE typically being found on the south shore of the state and that WNV is found everywhere.

Susan Wilfahrt said she felt conflicted about the mosquito spraying since she assumes WNV is found everywhere beginning in the mid-summer and she was not in favor of redundant spraying in certain areas of Hamilton and did not advocate spraying the entire Town. She was in favor of people self-protecting with bug spray and not going outside.

Wilfahrt said from a medical standpoint people are bitten by these mosquitoes daily and have no symptoms, 1% have severe illness. She noted the controversy about spraying and protecting children and the elderly from potentially contracting disease after being bitten by infected mosquitoes. She acknowledged that MCD would advocate spraying since that is their job.

Discussion ensued about Topsfield being the only surrounding community where WNV was found and that test results for Hamilton would be available on Friday. Whelan said the decision to spray is complex and is based on the number of mosquitoes and the kinds that bite people. She referred the residents to MCD for details on mosquitoes analyzed and noted that in the five years she has been working in Hamilton this is the first year MCD has suggested the Town consider spraying.

Willnow noted that WNV is being found nationwide and ground-based spraying is being done. Wilfahrt mentioned that a lot of disease is being identified in humans in certain parts of the country (i.e., Texas) although risk/benefit analysis does not exist. Willnow said risks and benefits of spraying are a tradeoff for the prevention of horrific disease.

Discussion ensued about how the occurrence of disease carrying mosquitoes could be a side effect of the mild winter. Also reiterated was whether or not spraying has any impact on bat population that regulates mosquito population.

Board decided it will wait until Friday to get results from MCD and if there is a positive that spraying would likely be done on weeknights when there are fewer people out rather than during the weekend. Whelan said MCD could spray the following night if the Town notified it of a positive result. Lombardo suggested that in a crisis situation spraying might be done immediately but he thought the

Town should err on the side of caution giving residents notification before spraying occurs so they can close doors and windows.

Willnow mentioned that if a positive is found in Hamilton then a Connect CTY message could be prepared and sent out quickly if a decision to spray is made. The Board reiterated its interest in waiting for results to come in on Friday to assess the type of mosquitoes and how many are found. Willnow noted the decision to spray would be made on a case-by-case basis.

Lombardo emphasized importance of notifying residents and offered to draft language for Board of Health review that would be used to communicate with community about why Town officials are deciding upon the action to spray for mosquitoes. Discussion ensued with residents about how best to notify citizens by encouraging them to check information on Hamilton's website on a regular basis. Lombardo mentioned that a map could be included on the website that highlights streets where spraying would occur. Also mentioned was that the local cable television channel and PATCH online news service could carry information on the matter and Connect CTY message could be shortened and reference that further details could be found on website.

In response to residents, Whelan explained that there is no additional charge for spraying as it is included in the annual MCD fee. Town officials mentioned that there is a pool of participating communities and the annual fee could go up next year to manage costs for mosquito analysis and spraying. Also, if positives are found in the local area, MCD is going to recommend spraying.

Discussion reiterated Board of Health decision to wait until Friday for results from testing. Lombardo described how a horse was euthanized in Hamilton over the weekend but there has been no positive animal test for EEE on state website. He suggested adding a link from Town website to state website.

Paskalis said state report notes one human case of EEE that was contracted out of state and one of WNV with a person in western Mass. Discussion was about prevalence of EEE in south shore part of state. Lombardo mentioned that HWRSD is handing out bug repellent and is controlling school activities. He will keep the school personnel abreast of MCD and DPH test results. Willnow said Town officials would strive to get the message out to citizenry more clearly. Also discussed was whether or not state has not continued testing dead birds for EEE or WNV.

Whelan explained that she received a call from the state about the positive result in Hamilton's mosquitoes tested at 3:30 last Friday. Willnow asked her to notify him about the results expected this upcoming Friday whether negative or positive.

Meeting Adjourned:

Zagorski moved at 9:04 p.m. to adjourn. Wilfahrt 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