

HAMILTON & WENHAM BOARDS OF HEALTH

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2012

Present: Hamilton Town officials: Board of Health Lindle Willnow, chair, Susan Wilfahrt and Karen Zagorski, members. Health Agent Leslie Whelan, BOH Administrative Assistant Nancy Stevens, Town Manager Michael Lombardo, Selectman Jennifer Scuteri, Public Health Nurse Kim Paskalis, HWRSD Superintendent of Schools Michael Harvey, H-W Recreation Director Sean Timmons, Wenham Health Agent Greg Bernard, Wenham Board of Health Gerry Donnellan, chair, and Miguel Martinez, member, also present.

Meeting Opened: Lindle Willnow called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at Hamilton Town Hall

Discussion – Mosquito Control Update: Threat level of Mosquito Borne Illness

Health Agent Leslie Whelan said she had received a phone call from the Department of Health reporting that a horse in Essex was found to test positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis. So DPH raised the risk level for EEE to critical in Essex and in Hamilton. She explained that the towns adjacent to Hamilton and Essex would have the threat level of mosquito borne illness raised to high. Whelan added that critical is the fifth of five DPH categories for mosquitoes carrying disease, high is the fourth of five categories and these towns have been ranked moderate to this point.

Whelan noted that the DPH representative was encouraging Hamilton to put on an outdoor activity ban. Chair Lindle Willnow mentioned that in anticipation of the threat level being raised to critical indicates that the Board of Health needs to take steps to protect the Town's citizens. Discussion ensued about Essex, Manchester and Rockport already having an outdoor activity ban from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. Gloucester has a similar ban for sporting events although it is not as broad to encompass all outdoor activities, public and private.

Willnow restated that the risk level of critical indicates that multiple cases of human disease from mosquito borne viruses are extremely likely at this time. There has been at least one human and/or animal case or disease or rapid escalation of indications of risk in the area (i.e., horse in Essex).

He noted the DPH's key recommendation that the Town should work with their community around cancelling or rescheduling outdoor gatherings, organized sporting events, etc. during peak mosquito hours. Willnow said the reason for tonight's meeting was to take this action working with the community given Essex and Manchester's responses.

He suggested the appropriate response for Hamilton is to ban outdoor activities from 5 p.m. until 8 a.m. Public Health Nurse Kim Paskalis explained that the state recommends such a ban from dawn to dusk (5 p.m. to 8 a.m.). Willnow thought this timing was prudent to act conservatively. Town officials noted that residents would be outside before 8 a.m. (i.e., to travel on school buses) and they recommended they protect themselves against mosquito bites.

Wenham Board of Health Chair Gerry Donnellan mentioned the input his board had received from the HW youth soccer organization that runs activities at the Iron Rail field and is interested in holding makeup times due to rained out activities. Especially as it gets darker earlier, the mosquitoes are going to become more active during the time when sporting activities are held. He said in past years when the outdoor activity time was limited due to mosquito risk, it was a hardship to coaches and there was not enough time to hold games.

Karen Zagorski noted that a teacher from Georgetown had told her that recess time during the school day in that community was cancelled due to the death of a woman in the town from a mosquito borne illness. Willnow added that Georgetown has been at the critical level for two weeks due to a horse testing positive and the woman that passed away. He mentioned that there has been a serious problem with EEE and West Nile Virus statewide and nationwide.

In response to Town Manager Michael Lombardo who inquired about BOH's consideration of additional spraying or outdoor activity ban, Whelan explained that Mosquito Control District could spray if the Town requested it. However, since it is now 60 degrees when it is dark at night, this is not conducive to spraying.

Selectman Jennifer Scuteri asked for clarification about spraying and potential effect on Manchester's water supply if spraying requested by Hamilton was occurring in that area. Willnow explained that his understanding of the truck mounted spraying is that the chemical does not disperse much more than 10 to 15 feet from the edge of the road by design.

He noted that the Board of Health has previously discussed the efficacy of spraying and mentioned that MCD does not spray near open water (i.e., on Chebacco Road near Round or Gravelly Ponds). Whelan said MCD described how under optimal conditions, the spray could go as far as 300 feet. Donnellan mentioned the spraying that occurred in Wenham on the Iron Rail property including in the marsh and swamp behind Gordon College.

Discussion ensued about outdoor activities in Hamilton including: soccer, youth football, field hockey, and golf involving several hundred children Monday through Friday. Hamilton has sprayed twice in the Chebacco Lake area and once near Highland Street including Asbury Grove.

Whelan mentioned as of last Sunday, MCD had recommended a targeted spray could be done in Chebacco area since it was closest to Essex. Now that the threat in Town has been raised to critical the MCD recommendation may be different (i.e., spraying all of Hamilton). Discussion ensued about if a targeted area is designated for spraying that makes response time easier for MCD. Whelan thought it would take as many as six trucks (MCD's whole fleet) to spray the whole Town.

Discussion continued about the threat being in Essex on Milk Street between Grove and Forest Streets, closer to Sagamore Road in Hamilton and that spraying could occur in this area and Chebacco area. Whelan noted that the horse that tested positive for EEE is a mile and a half from the Hamilton border in Essex near Gloucester. Health officials suggested that MCD could possibly spray in two targeted areas essentially the same size as the Highland Street area. Donnellan suggested that MCD might not have the resources to spray the whole Town of Hamilton. HWRSD Superintendent of Schools Michael Harvey mentioned that a 48-hour notice is needed before spraying takes place near school grounds.

Discussion ensued about how MCD has rated mosquito borne illness threat in Wenham as moderate relative to consideration of youth soccer activities being held in Wenham. Wenham Board of Health member Dr. Martinez noted that his board was considering curtailing outdoor activity.

Discussion addressed fact that MCD would have increased surveillance when Hamilton first had mosquitoes carrying disease identified in mosquito samples. Paskalis noted that this late in the season the MCD traps are not as reliable for mosquito testing due to how mosquitoes are attracted to the traps. Donnellan

mentioned that spraying occurred in Wenham two weeks ago at the Iron Rail site.

Willnow moved that the Board of Health put forth a ban to outdoor activities from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. until threat level is lowered or a hard frost occurs with temperatures at 28 degrees for several hours.

Discussion ensued about ban including all organized outdoor activities. Whelan suggested this could be interpreted as residents planning any kind of outdoor activities, (i.e., outdoor cookout) and she noted that this could not be enforced. Willnow mentioned that this conveys the message that the threat of mosquitoes carrying disease is serious.

Whelan noted that the outdoor activity ban was specific in Gloucester to exclude private property and only addressed youth sport and city playing fields and included information for residents to take precautionary measures (i.e., wear long sleeves and use insect repellent) and specified that restaurants with outdoor seating were to post information about risk of mosquito borne illness.

She added that now that the horse in Essex has been identified with EEE, this could increase the restrictions in the Gloucester ban since its threat has been changed to high. Whelan reiterated that Hamilton's threat is critical based on the municipality having similar mosquitoes and habitat as Essex. Discussion ensued about communities that have had positive mosquito tests and actions taken by those municipalities.

Willnow amended his motion to urge all citizens to take appropriate precautionary measures during the hours the ban is in place. Discussion ensued about how Board of Health should send a message about their decision to ban all outdoor activities to the public and private schools (i.e., Pingree and Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary) and local businesses. Willnow acknowledged the hardship the outdoor activity ban would have on sports activities. H-W Recreation Director Sean Timmons noted that the youth sports organizations and HW High School have pulled their practice schedules in to end at an earlier time in the evening. Susan Wilfahrt seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous. Willnow restated the approved motion: the Hamilton Board of Health has issued a ban on all organized outdoor activities between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. until the threat level is lowered or until the first hard frost occurs. All citizens are urged to take appropriate precautionary measures during those hours effective

immediately. Discussion ensued about how the likelihood of the threat level going down until there is a hard frost is slim.

Martinez noted that there is a distinction between high and critical and that the Wenham Board of Health would not be inclined to exclude private functions in a ban.

Discussion ensued about Board of Health's authority to enforce ban if it states that public and private outdoor activities were included. It was agreed that the municipalities do not have the resources to enforce the ban for private activities. Willnow noted that all local press and online cable television would be notified of the ban.

Donnellan moved that the Wenham Board of Health has issued a ban on all organized public outdoor activities between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. until the threat level is lowered or until the first hard frost occurs. Wenham town officials agreed to notify the Wenham Tea House of the mosquito borne illness threat relative to the restaurant having outdoor seating. All citizens are urged to take appropriate precautionary measures during those hours effective immediately. Martinez seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned:

Willnow moved at 6:43 p.m. to adjourn. Zagorski seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous. The Board's next meeting is on Wednesday, October 24 at 7:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

cc: Selectmen, Planning Board, Town Clerk, Conservation