



Town of Oak Bluffs
Board of Health
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William White
Chairman
James Butterick
Thomas Zinno
Board Members
Garrett Albiston
Health Agent

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES
May 3, 2022 – 10:00 AM**

**In accordance with Governor Bakers emergency modification of the Open Meeting Law
this meeting was held virtually.**

Members Present: William White, James Butterick, Thomas Zinno

Others Present: Garrett Albiston, Alexa Arieta, Maura McGroarty, Joe Sullivan, Kris O'Brien, Susan Desmarais, Rebekah Thompson, Richard Toole

Chairperson white calls the meeting to order at 10:01 AM

BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION:

- Discussion of draft regulation to restrict the installation of artificial turf containing PFAS in the Town of Oak Bluffs

Chairperson White indicates that this particular meeting will be a board discussion only.

Mr Zinno says he has gone back through previous meetings and reiterates some concerns the board had, one being a material to capture the PFAS particles that may break off, and stated that there wasn't one available for this project. He also speaks to remediation, similar to the testing and remediation at the MV airport, and the costs associated with this remediation if needed. He states that the Board of Health needs to figure out how big of a PFAS problem we currently have. We need to do testing to figure out how big of a problem exists today. Mr Zinno mentions a cloth product that absorbs PFAS when installed underneath things like leaching fields and athletic playing fields. Company named CETCO-they make landfill capping products

Mr White says our responsibility is public health.

Mr Butterick states that we have seen a lot of support and opposition for this, and there are so many questions still unanswered. The state level task force for this just issued a statement 88 pages long-and the state is looking to ban this product. He states that the Board of Health's responsibility is to protect the public's right to clean drinking water, and he still has a lot of questions about this.

Mr Albiston states that with the potential for these chemicals to get into our groundwater, and a lot of signs pointing to the possibility that some of these chemicals may be carcinogens. The Tetrach study found PFOA in the turf and the shock pad and that is one of the chemicals that they are strongly looking at as being a potential carcinogen. He thinks it is wise to wait and do more research and find out where that research leads us before allowing something to leach into the groundwater like that.

Mr Butterick states that is inappropriate for the Board to be talking solely about the turf field, because this is not the only source of PFAS. That we should be testing septic systems that can be tested and find out how big of a problem we have. We know the highest PFAS concentrations in Oak Bluffs wells are those closest to the closed landfill. This isn't just about the turf field, but about PFAS in general.

Mr White states that we have a lot of options. What is the best option to protect the public health? Can we adopt some regulations? Do we let it go through? Do we issue a moratorium?

Maura McGroarty asks to speak. She asks if the public can see the potential regulations? Will we show them to the public before we vote on this? Is this regulation going to address only the MVRHS turf field, or septic systems as well.

Mr Butterick says that the Board of Health needs to make an independent decision, but that we need to decide what we are going to do about the existing PFAS.

Joe Sullivan asks to speak. He would hate to see a knee jerk reaction to this without the information in front of you clearly identifying if there will be an impact at all. From the third party experts, Weston and Sampson and Tetrattech stated that they didn't find that there would be harmful leaching from this field into the groundwater. Joe hasn't seen any other research to date to state otherwise. It is a large discussion and a global issue, and not specific to a turf field.

Mr White responds that while it is a global issue, what makes it different here is that the proposed field will be on top of our sole source aquifer, and that he is unaware of anywhere else in the state that this is the case. We will do the best we can to use the information presented to us in a way that serves the public health.

Joe responds that the Town of Carver has installed a field over an aquifer and we should look into that.

Kris O'Brien asks to speak. She states that this is a tremendous task the BOH in undertaking. She reads some excerpts from the PFAS interagency task force report, and mentions the public education gap and the public lack of awareness. She recommends, as a resident, that the BOH look to creating a campaign to educate what we are putting in our homes and around our homes. That while the proposed turf field is on the aquifer, so are we all. And PFAS comes from everything we use.

Susan Desmarais asks to speak. It seems reasonable to put a moratorium on the turf and proceed with the rest of the project. PFAS is a forever chemical and no one wants to be trying to remediate this afterwards.

Rebekah Thompson asks to speak. She echos Susan's thoughts, and adds her support for a moratorium. Information is coming out at a rapid pace, and says that the state is looking to regulate PFAS as a class and taking it very seriously. We need to stop using it anywhere that is not essential. There is an alternative to the turf field. She asks to look at the letter of Dr Laura Shader to the OB Planning Board, and at the presentation by Dr Peasely and Kristen Mello from the NEMOA Conference, highlighting the unknowns of PFAS.

Richard Toole asks to speak. We need better field maintenance. We need to forget the plastic field. He asks to please not allow this.

Mr White states that the board will continue to look into this.

Mr Zinno reminds everyone that we have an unlined old landfill, and an old salvage yard-both of which will need to be addressed in the future.

Mr Butterick makes a motion to adjourn at 10:48 AM. Mr Zinno seconds. Adjourned 3-0.

Respectfully submitted by Alexa Arieta