**DEDHAM BOARD OF HEALTH**

**COVID-19 MEETING MINUTES**

**April 8, 2020**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nancy Baker, Assistant Town Manager

Leanne Jasset, B.S.P., RPH Chairperson

Mary Ellard, RN., Member

Bridget Sweet, Interim Health Director

**Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM**

**5:30 Board of Health COVID-19 update**

The Board of health held a board meeting on Wednesday April 8, 2020 to update Dedham residents on state and local preparedness efforts and impacts related to COVID-19 (commonly referred to as Coronavirus).

In addition to those in attendance, the following people were on the call:

* Kathy Reda – RN., BSN Vice Chairperson
* Fior Griffin – Administrative Assistant
* Michele Heffernan – Endicott Estate Commission Chair
* Erin Perron – Endicott Estate Director
* Sara Smegal – Resident
* Alison Stanton - Resident

1. **Endicott Estate Director Erin Perron & Commission Chair Michele Heffernan – Re: Public Use of the Estate Grounds**

Endicott Estate director, Erin Perron, is concerned about the groups of people gathering at the Endicott Estate. She feels that because the playgrounds and parks are closed, people are congregating at the Endicott Estate, violating the social distancing guidelines that have been put into place. Erin would like to see the Board of Health follow the City of Boston, saying that open spaces are closed. Kathy Reda suggested placing signage in the parking lot to deter people from gathering in the parking lot. This will allow people to walk through the property but discourage gathering at the Endicott Estate. Interim Health Director Bridget Sweet, offered to help develop signage to place at the parking lot to educate and remind the public about the social distancing guidelines. The Board agrees that they will post signage in the parking lot and revisit the issue at the next board meeting on Wed. April 15th.

The next concern raised by the Endicott Estate Director and Commission Chair is the non-profit run greenhouse on the Endicott Estate property. The challenge is that the greenhouse is still operating without maintaining proper social distancing or wearing appropriate PPE. Bridget will issue a Cease and Desist order to the operators of the greenhouse.

1. **Discussion w/Interim Health Director Bridget Sweet Re: Cease & Desist Orders Issued to Boch Ice Arena, Williams Sonoma, Dick’s Sporting Goods & Game Stop, and an update on Stop & Shop and BJ’s Wholesale Club**

The Board has had problems with business operating as essential business when they are not in fact essential. The challenge has been that the Board of Health is not the permitting authority on many of these businesses. The department has had to go out to GameStop, Dicks Sporting Goods, and Williams Sonoma and Kuman to deliver a cease & desist orders because they were not supposed to be operating. The department has received support from the State in reaching out to GameStop and Dicks to ask them to close their stores and has issued a statewide cease and desist order to Williams Sonoma. Petco was also given specific guidance that they can remain open, but the grooming services need to stop. In a reversal of guidance, just before the meeting began, the Board was informed that Kuman can re-open under a limited scope.

The other challenge that we are facing are the high volume of complaints. One complaint was concerning the Boch Arena remaining open. Health inspectors were sent to Boch and upon arrival there were about 15 people skating. The Health Department forced the people to evacuate immediately and Boch was shut down again. Boch will be brought before the Board during one of the upcoming board meetings to explain why they were open when they were aware that they were supposed to be closed. The Interim Director would like to remind the public that every time an inspector has to go out to investigate a complaint, it puts the inspectors at risk because they must engage with the public and can possibly be exposed to Covid-19.

The Health department has also received complaints/concerns regarding BJs because of social distancing protocols. After inspection they were required to add signage and asked to place lines and tape on the ground to help with social distancing. BJs Corporate was very helpful in getting the store to cooperate.

1. **Discussion & Vote on Covid-19 Action Items**

In support of the recommendation from the Commissioner of Public Health, Kathy Reda motions to strongly recommend that all personnel working in a grocery stores wear face covering. Mary Ellard seconds the motion. Roll call Vote: Kathy Reda, yes. Mary Ellard Yes. Lianne Jasset, yes. The board will continue to monitor these guidelines and will adjust accordingly, and revisit as needed.

The board discussed the order issued April 7, 2020 regarding guidance for grocery stores, specifically limiting occupancy to 40 percent of its maximum permitted occupancy level per its permit on record with municipal building departments. This limit is applicable to both employees and customers.

1. **Release of Current Confirmed Covid-19 Cases in Dedham**

There are 77 confirmed cases of the virus in Dedham as of April 8, 2020.

The board wishes to express its appreciation to Dedham’s Public Health Nurse and all school nurse volunteers who maintain daily surveillance and monitoring of COVID-19 in the community. We also wish to express our gratitude to the Health Department staff who, daily go above and beyond to assure the safety and well-being of our residents.

The board wishes to share the recent announcement from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services regarding the launch of the Nursing Home Family Resource Line – a dedicated phone line to connect family members of nursing home and rest home residents with the information and resources they need.

The Nursing Home Family Resource Line is staffed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week. Staff will field questions on a range of topics and coordinate across state agencies to help provide answers. Please call 617-660-5399 to speak with a representative.

Locally, residents are always encouraged to contact the Dedham Health Department at 781-751-9220 with any questions or concerns.

1. **Public Comment**

Allison Stanton – Would like to know how the grant that the Health Department received was spent and if there were any plans concerning our Flag Day celebration?

Chairperson Jasset explained that we are in the preliminary stages of distributing the grant money. They are still assessing the needs and where the money can best be used. As for Flag Day, there have been no discussion or decision yet but there should be updates coming out shortly.

Sara Smegal – Asks for clarity regarding gathering at the Endicott Estate. The Board clarified that they do not want people gathering in cars in the parking lot at the Endicott Estate.

Allison Stanton – She would like to know if the public could be told the age and sex of people in Dedham confirmed to have the Coronavirus. Chairperson Jasset, replied that at this time there has been no discussion to release additional information about those confirmed with the Coronavirus. Interim Director Sweet added that all guidance received from the Department of Public Health, has advised towns not to release any additional specific information. The board will continue to make public, on a weekly basis, the confirmed number of cases in the Town of Dedham.

1. **Old/New Business\***

Mary Ellard motions to adjourn the meeting at 6:32pm. Kathy Reda seconds that motion. Roll Call vote: Mary Ellard, Yes. Kathy Reda, Yes. Leanne Jasset, Yes. Meeting Adjourned.

The Health Department staff continues to work closely with essential businesses affected by these and other changes and appreciates the understanding and support from the community.

As recently stated by US Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams, “the power to change the trajectory of this disease lies in the hands of the American people.”  The board appreciates the efforts of the Dedham community to continue practicing social distancing and frequent hand-washing; your efforts will go a long way in helping to flatten the curve!