



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

DOUGLAS KRESS
DIRECTOR

MINUTES
BOARD OF HEALTH
October 21, 2021
Open Conference / Virtual Meeting

Present:

Douglas Kress, Director
Brian Green, MD (Chair)
Robert Ciccio, Board Member
Paula Machado, Board Member

City Staff – Bonny Carroll, Tobacco Director
Matthew Mitchell – Prevention Director

Guests: 6

Meeting Called to Order:

On a motion made by Dr. Green, the meeting was called to order at 6:05pm. Ms. Machado seconded it.

Approval of Minutes: Dr. Green made a motion to approve the August 19, and September 9, 2021 minutes.' Ms. Machado seconded it.

Variance Request: Commercial Construction Consulting Inc. is requesting a plumbing variance to install one Unisex bathroom located at 375 Canal Street a/k/a Foley Street for a maximum of 15 employees.

Dr. Green made a motion to grant Commercial Construction Consulting a variance to install one gender neutral bathroom. It was seconded by Paula Machado. A vote was taken 3-0 All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Tobacco Regulation Updates: Bonny Carroll and DJ Wilson presented the City of Somerville Regulations to the Board Members and the regulations highlighted in green (for proposed changes). The recommendations were to get the city's tobacco regulations more in line with the state regulations. Following are some highlights of proposed changes....

- A. Violations - 1st offense of 1,000 and a 3 day suspension selling to a minor under 21
Three (3) or more violations within 36 – month period a suspension of permit for 30 consecutive days
- B. Definition of rolling paper was added to regs and flavor rolling paper will be prohibited
- C. Add Vape Bar to the Smoking Bar section of regulations
- D. Smoking Bars are prohibited in the City of Somerville
- E. New definition for blunt wraps
- F. Capping of permits was discussed but at this time, it is on hold and not part of Somerville's Tobacco Regulations.

The Board approved of the three (3) day suspension to a retailer who sells to a minor under 21. A vote was taken 3-0 All in Favor.

Drug Paranoia – Mr. Mitchell gave a brief overview of CBD uses and sales of CBD in Somerville stores. A complaint was filed that a store was selling CBD products. The CBD was used in food products such as gummies, and

Othert edibles. CBD in food products is not allowed. Mr. Mitchell is recommending to add cbd phanuilia to the current regulations, as stores will not be allow to display in store fronts

Opiod IUse State of Emergency: Health & Human Services Director, Mr. Kress gave an overview and read the city's declation to fight opiod addiction. Dr. green made a motion to adobt the deckatration. A vote was taken a3-0 all in favor.

COVID19/Vaccine Updates:

Eviction Moratorium: Ellen Shatner from the City of Somerville Housing Stability Office, presented slides on updates of the Eviction Moratorium, topics including as follows:

- A. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued an order effective August 3, 2021 for the moratorium remains in effect until October 3, 2021 extending and revising the federal eviction moratorium for US counties experiencing "substantial or "high levels" of community transmission of Covid as defined by the CDC.
- B. The rationale for the extension are as follows:
 1. Vaccination rates are lower for populations most likely to face eviction (vulnerable population).
 2. Study of 43 states show significant increase in incidence and mortality approximately two (2) to three (3) months after state of local eviction moratorium lifted.
 3. Eviction moratorium allows quarantining in place for people who become ill or who are at risk of transmitting the disease.
- C. Caseload Data – OHS received 72 new cases for assistance; Somerville Homeless Coalition waitlist is at 342 applicants.
- D. Court Filings – Sixty-five (65) new cases filed since 10/15/20 at the Eastern Housing Court and seventy-five new cases filed at the Somerville Courthouse as of 10/15/20.
- E. Unemployment Data as of 06/01/21 was 4.1% percentage of residents unemployed in Somerville.

Board of Health Public Hearing on Mask Mandates: The Board of Health conducted a public hearing virtually at their August 19, 2021 board meeting where the public was able to speak on the city's proposed face mask mandate. After listening to the comments from the public, the board members gave their views why the face mask mandate should be approved for the following reasons:

Being vaccinated along with wearing mask is double the safety of covid transmissions. Children and persons who cannot be vaccinated, mask are the next best option for staying safe. The city along with their board of health is trying everything to protect all in the city and the Mask Mandate is a very good tool to keep transmissions low. Dr. Green brought up how the mandate would be enforced and how the city can help local restaurants industries keep in compliance. The city's mask mandate proposal can be found on their website at www.somervillema.gov.

Dr. Green made a motion to implement the mask mandate effective Friday, August 20, 2021. It was seconded by Ms. Machado. A vote was taken 3 yes / 0 no. All in Favor **MOTION CARRIED UNAMOUSLY.**

Directors' Updates: Mr. Kress said that vaccines and testing clinics are ongoing with various sites throughout the city. Information on covid219 vaccines and testing clinics and additional resources can be found on the city website at www.somervillema.gov. The city is awaiting guidance form the state on the booster vaccine.

Next meeting – Virtual

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Adjournment:

On a motion made by Dr. Green, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm. Ms. Machado seconded it.

List of Documents:

Notice/Agenda, Eviction Moratorium Slides

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Henkle-Teixeira
Board of Health Secretary
September 16, 2021
(Revised October 8, 2021)

