

Administrator's Report
Board of Health Meeting of April 21, 2021, 2021
Report covers from 03/25 to 04/20/2021
Items requiring Board vote are noted with an asterisk ()*

A. Inspection Report Reviews

(1) 85 Pond Street, Montgomery, Map 153, Lot 35 *

I have reviewed the Title 5 report for the inspection conducted at this property on March 21, 2021, by Rick Clarke. The inspector has noted that the system is functioning as intended and passes the Title 5 inspection.

Recommendation: I recommend the Board of Health send a letter to the property owner stating we are in agreement with the determination of the inspector, Richard Clarke, that the system passes the official Title 5 inspection conducted on March 21, 2021. The system is designed for a maximum of 3 bedrooms.

B. Septic System Design Plan Reviews

(1) 193 John Wise Avenue, Blanchette, Map 105, Lot 25*

I have reviewed the plan for the proposed septic tank replacement at this property, designed by Jesse Blanchette and dated March 14, 2021 with a revision date of March 25, 2021. The designer has revised the plan to include the approved daily design flow of 330 gallons per day.

Recommendation: I recommend the Board of Health send a letter to the property owner stating the proposed septic tank replacement plan, designed by Jesse Blanchette with a final revision date of March 25, 2021 is approved. The system is approved for a maximum of 330 gallons per day.

(2) 1 Laurel Lane, Laurel Lane LLC, Map 209, Lot 29*

I have reviewed the plan for the proposed septic system upgrade at this property, designed by Chris Rokos and dated December 9, 2020 with a revision date of March 3, 2021. The designer has made all necessary corrections to this design plan, and the proposed system is now in compliance with Title 5 and local regulations.

Recommendation: I recommend the Board of Health send a letter to the property owner stating the plan for the proposed septic system upgrade, designed by Chris Rokos with a final revision date of March 3, 2021 is approved. The system is designed to accommodate a maximum of 350 gallons per day.

C. Building Permit Applications (informational only)

(1) 1 Laurel Lane, Laurel Lane LLC, Map 209, Lot 29

I have reviewed and signed the building permit application for the construction of 3 cold storage containers at this property. There will be no plumbing or increase in flow to the septic system from this portion of the property.

(2) 51 Story Street, Cort, Map 134, Lot 39

I have reviewed and signed the building permit application for the interior renovation of this property to reduce the number of bedrooms from 3 to 2; there will be no increase in flow to the septic system.

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(3) 39 Middle Road, Bingham, Map 108, Lot 21

I have reviewed and signed the building permit application to demo an existing shed at this property and construct a new shed in the same location. There will be no increase in flow to the tight tank.

(4) 193 John Wise Avenue, Blanchette, Map 105, Lot 25

I have reviewed and signed the building permit application for the renovation of the kitchen at this property. The new kitchen will increase the footprint of the dwelling and will reduce the setback to the septic tank. As such, the owner has an approved plan to relocate the septic tank to meet the minimum 10' setback requirement.

(5) 140 Western Avenue, Building Center, Map 143, Lot 19

I have reviewed and signed the building permit application for the demo of an existing storage shed and the construction of metal racking/storage on this property. The building is connected to municipal sewer and there is no additional Title 5 requirements for this building activity.

D. COVID-19 Updates

(1) Case Count

As of April 20, 2021, Essex has had 181 total confirmed positive cases and 91 so far this year. Contact tracing continues to be an issue, with positive cases not providing the identifying information for their close contacts or acknowledging the isolation requirements.

(2) Youth and Amateur Sports*

We have received rosters and schedules from the North Shore Freedom youth league, as well as the Legends adult amateur league. The roster and schedule for Manchester-Essex Little League is not yet complete, but will be provided to us before the start of the season.

There has been discussion on whether the players will be able to maintain the 6' social distancing requirement that's outlined in the safety standard provided by MDPH and EEA. The interior measurement of the new dugouts is 29', and the bench inside each dugout is 25'. The 6' social distancing requirement means that each dugout may only have 4-5 people (depending, based on the location of the interior support beams). We have provided the information on the social distancing requirements to the league managers.

Recommendation: Discussion on how to proceed with the use of the dugouts; possible options include allowing the teams to independently determine where players may be inside the structure; (temporarily) marking the benches in 6' increments; or closing the dugouts completely until the 6' social distancing requirement is lifted by MDPH and EEA.

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E. Other Items

(1) Marine Beach Testing Variance*

Bathing beach standards generally require that marine beaches be tested for bacteria weekly during the bathing season (Memorial Day to Labor Day). However, MA DPH allows local Boards of Health to request a variance from this requirement, instead testing marine beaches on a monthly basis. (Fresh water beaches such as Chebacco Lake are still required to be tested weekly; no variance is available). This is permissible when we have a history of testing results that are consistently below the MCL for swimming, and no major changes or alterations have been made to the beach area.

We are required to request this variance from the MA DPH standard every 5 years for Clammers Beach and Front Beach; and the variance renewal is due this year.

Recommendation: I request the Board of Health vote to submit the variance request to MA DPH to allow for monthly, rather than weekly, testing of Clammers and Front Beaches.

(2) Mosquito Control and Aerial Spraying*

Historically, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) required a municipality to formally opt in to the statewide, municipality-specific aerial spraying program, offered to reduce the risk of transmission of mosquito-borne illnesses. Alternatively, a city/town may vote to be part of a mosquito control district, which provides alternatives to aerial spraying (such as larviciding and treatment of catch basins). Membership in a mosquito control district requires that residents approve this expense at a Town Meeting, and so far, this has been voted down in Essex.

There are proposed changes to this program which will require a municipality to opt out of the aerial spraying program; per information on the MDAR website, the deadline for a municipality to opt out is May 15, 2021, and in order to opt out, we have to have an alternative mosquito management plan in place. MDAR is accepting comments about this change via phone at (508) 281-6786 or via email at MosquitoProgram@mass.gov.

Recommendation: Discussion on whether to apply to opt out of the MDAR program for aerial spraying.

(3) Pets in restaurants*

We have had an inquiry on the variance process to allow pets (specifically dogs) in food service establishments. The FDA food code, as well as MA Food Protection Program regulations prohibit animals in food service areas. However, there is a provision in the regulations for the Board of Health to grant variances on a case by case basis provided the establishment has procedures in place to guarantee and equal or greater degree of protection to public health and safety.

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Recommendation: Discussion on whether to consider requests to vary the regulations in the FDA food code and MA FPP regulations to allow pets in restaurants on a case-by-case basis.

(4) Public Health Nursing job posting*

Our public health nurse, Lianne Cook, has informed us that her last day will be May 14, 2021. We will need to revise the job description and post the position for a minimum of 10 days. Our PHN budget (approved at Town Meeting) is for a maximum of 5 hours per week, so this is the number of hours we may advertise; however, we do have grant funding through the end of 2021 to supplement these hours for assistance with contact tracing efforts and other personnel expenses related to COVID-19.

Recommendation: Discussion and possible revision of PHN job description; agreement on timeline to post and possibly interview any applicants.