

**Braintree Board of Health
Meeting Held Via Zoom
Thursday, October 16, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Arthur Bregoli, Chairman
Juliana Melchionda, Clerk

ALSO PRESENT: Marybeth McGrath, Director of ML & I
Stormy Leung, Substance Use Prevention Coordinator
Kathleen Mahoney, Tobacco Compliance & Inspections

Dr. Bregoli called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. by roll call vote: Dr. Bregoli-yes;
Ms. Melchionda-yes

Dr. Bregoli read a statement on behalf of himself, Ms. Melchionda, and the staff of the Health Department on the death of Board of Health Vice Chairman Dr. Philip Nedelman. Dr. Nedelman passed away on October 9, 2025. He was a longstanding family physician in Braintree and was the longest serving physician on staff to date at South Shore Hospital, with his tenure beginning in February of 1964. He had continued to work in telemedicine until the time of his death. Dr. Nedelman served on the Board of Health since April 8, 1998. He also served as the Braintree town physician and school physician. He was the team physician for the Braintree Football team and was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016.

Dr. Bregoli extended their condolences to Dr. Nedelman's wife Dorothy and daughter Kate, who were present at the meeting. They both thanked everyone for their support. Ms. Melchionda stated it has been an honor to work with Dr. Nedelman for the past five years on the Board. She stated she would not have had the close working relationship without her mother, Laurie Melchionda, who also served on the Board with Dr. Nedelman. Ms. McGrath stated she had the honor, privilege and pleasure of working with Dr. Nedelman since January 11, 2000. She stated he convinced her to come to Braintree and she had a wonderful relationship with him and his family. Kathleen Mahoney stated she has not worked with Dr. Nedelman very long but it was a privilege to work with him.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: August 14, 2025

Motion By: Ms. Melchionda to approve the minutes of August 14, 2025

Second By: Dr. Bregoli

Voted by roll call:

Dr. Bregoli-yes; Ms. Melchionda-yes

New Business:

Hearing: Sale of Tobacco Violation, Braintree Smoke Shop, 6 Commercial Street

Present before the Board was Tony Elouazzani, Manager of Braintree Smoke Shop.

Ms. Mahoney stated on August 19 her youth officer entered the establishment around 10:45 a.m. She was able to enter the location, which is an adult only establishment, without being asked for identification. She went to the counter and asked for a Crave Clear 5%. She was told by the clerk they did not have that but they were coming in soon. The clerk grabbed a 3% and asked the youth for identification. The youth responded she did not have identification and the clerk stated that was okay and sold her the product.

Mr. Elouazzani addressed the Board. He stated this was an honest mistake by a newer employee. He had trained her and gave her one week suspension without pay for this mistake. She is back to work now and is scared and is now scanning all identifications for everyone that walks in. He apologized and stated he would do whatever he has to do to comply with the law.

Ms. McGrath stated this would be a first offense of the tobacco sales regulations and the penalty is a \$1000 fine as well as a five day suspension of the tobacco sales permit. Mr. Elouazzani stated he would pay the \$1000 fine but asked that the Board not impose the suspension of the tobacco sales permit as he has only been in business for a couple of months and needs to keep the doors open. Ms. Melchionda stated they respect him and his business but they are responsible for upholding the law.

Motion By: Ms. Melchionda to uphold the first offense and \$1000 fine and suspension of the tobacco sales permit starting at noon Friday, October 17, 2025.

Second By: Dr. Bregoli
Voted by roll call:
Dr. Bregoli-yes; Ms. Melchionda-yes

Mr. Elouazzani stated he did not see the five day suspension for a first offense on the papers he was given. Ms. McGrath stated she was at his establishment prior to its opening, along with Ms. Mahoney, and personally reviewed this information with him. Dr. Bregoli indicated this is not a Braintree regulation, but a Massachusetts law.

Presentation on Kratom:

Stormy Leung gave a presentation to the Board. She stated Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. It is traditionally used by laborers and farmers, who chew the leaves to provide energy and relief from muscle strains. The leaves contain two major psychoactive ingredients, mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). She stated 7-OH is being synthesized in order to be put and products and distributed throughout the world. In the United States Kratom and 7-OH are not controlled under the Controlled

Substance Act. The FDA has not approved Kratom for any medical use and the DEA has listed Kratom as a drug and chemical concern. Anyone can purchase the product, even those under 21 years of age.

Ms. Leung reviewed examples of Kratom products that are being sold. She stated the synthetic products are high risk as they contain a significant amount of 7-OH as compared to the natural plant or natural crushed leaf products. 7-OH is 13x more potent than morphine. In low doses it has stimulant effects, in high doses it has sedative effects. She reviewed the effects and health concerns, including psychosis. She stated consumption can lead to addiction.

Ms. Leung stated she surveyed stores in Braintree and found Kratom in three of those stores. Products they were selling included powdered leaves, capsules, energy shots, gummies, tablets, and drinks. She stated the products are being marketed similar to the way the vape industry started, with flavors and vibrant colors. She stated she spoke to some of the retailers who indicated that sales of these products are going down, however, other neighboring communities do have more sales.

Ms. Leung stated there is a bill in the House right now at the state level to ban Kratom. At the local level there are towns that have banned Kratom. Those towns are Belchertown, Canton, Chelmsford, Dracut, Kingston, Lowell, and Marlborough. North Attleboro has restricted the sale of Kratom to adult only tobacco retail stores.

Ms. Mahoney stated Weymouth, Rockland and Pembroke are working on regulations. She stated she was at a statewide meeting and this product is getting a lot of attention throughout the state. Dr. Bregoli asked if they know when the House is going to vote. Ms. Mahoney stated she does not know, but she has spoken to Senator Keenan and will be meeting with him in the near future. She stated the street name for Kratom is gas station heroin.

Ms. McGrath stated the Board of Health can draft regulations around public health topics they would like to address. She stated they have spoken to the Mayor and Ms. Leung provided a presentation to the Mayor and they are looking for her support. She stated they are asking that the Board endorse consideration of drafting regulations for prohibition of Kratom.

Ms. Melchionda stated she would like to look into this more on her own before taking a vote to ensure this is going to be an issue within the Town of Braintree. Ms. Mahoney stated if she gets permission she may be able to provide information from a woman whose whole family has been impacted by this product.

Hearing: Bodywork Regulation Violation, Relaxing Sunlight Spa, 36 Commercial Street

Ms. McGrath stated there does not appear to be anyone in attendance to speak on behalf of Relaxing Sunlight Spa. She reviewed the violation information for the Board. She reported on September 10, 2025 her department was contacted by an investigator with the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Licenses indicating they had been called to Braintree on complaints with two establishments, one was 36 Commercial Street,

indicating there could be massage being offered there, which is licensed under the state, and also the possibility of habitation in the establishment. The investigator requested the presence of the Inspector of Buildings, Russ Forsberg. They went to the location at 36 Commercial Street and Mr. Forsberg observed definite habitation in a room, a shower fixture installed in the employee bathroom along with shower paraphernalia. Mr. Forsberg sent a zoning violation notice to the establishment indicating the violations need to be immediately corrected. On September 24, 2025 Mr. Forsberg conducted a compliance inspection and found they were still not in compliance. He conducted another inspection on September 26, 2025 and found the violations had been corrected.

Ms. McGrath stated because of these violations the establishment is in violation of the Bodywork Regulation in three areas. She was not notified by the owner that she would not be in attendance at this hearing. Ms. Melchionda recommended issuing a warning. Dr. Bregoli was in agreement with a warning, but asked what penalty could be assessed in the future. Ms. McGrath reviewed the penalties from the regulation.

Motion By: Dr. Bregoli to send a warning letter to the owner of Relaxing Sunlight Spa regarding the determination of violations of the Body Work regulation.

Second By: Ms. Melchionda
Voted by roll call:
Dr. Bregoli-yes; Ms. Melchionda-yes

Informational:

Dr. Bregoli asked if there is still a moratorium on permits for keeping of chickens. Ms. McGrath stated yes, as there continues to be concerns.

Ms. Mahoney reported that the person she spoke of during the Kratom discussion has given her permission to share her family's testimony so she will forward that information to the Board.

Motion By: Ms. Melchionda to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Second By: Dr. Bregoli
Voted by roll call:
Dr. Bregoli-yes; Ms. Melchionda-yes