

**BRAINTREE BOARD OF HEALTH**

**MINUTES**

**March 15, 2012**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Paula Dowd, Chairman  
Dr. Philip Nedelman, Vice Chairman  
Karen Hubbard, Clerk

**ALSO PRESENT:** Marybeth McGrath, Director of ML & I

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mrs. Dowd called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Motion By:** Dr. Nedelman to approve the meeting minutes of  
January 26, 2012.

**Second By:** Mrs. Hubbard

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Amendment to Definitive Subdivision-Elmlawn Road Extension (Almquist Estates)**

Ms. McGrath advised the Board that the Elmlawn Road Extension definitive subdivision that the Board previously approved between one and a half to two years ago is before them this evening for an amendment. More specifically, the amendment is more of a paperwork matter, rather than an on-site issue. Several of the neighbors on Roberts Street had their properties re-surveyed, and it appears that with the placement of the new subdivision, there is between a two to three foot differential in the markings that were placed on their properties that should not have been. So, they had to make up for it in the subdivision.

The Board reviewed the amended subdivision plans.

Ms. McGrath advised that in order to gain the footage that is needed, they will take 370 foot easement on lot seven so it does not interfere with the Roberts Street resident's property. They will also take two and one half feet off of the sidewalk on lot one, so it will not impact any abutting property. The plans before the Board this evening depict these amendments to lots one and seven.

Ms. McGrath further advised that the Planning Board took up this matter at their meeting on Tuesday March 13, 2012, and conditionally approved it pending the Board of Health approval.

Ms. McGrath recommended approval of the amendments.

**Motion By:** Dr. Nedelman to approve, as amended.

**Second By:** Mrs. Hubbard

**2. Karen Shanley, Director of Human Resources- RE: Employee Health & Wellness Program**

Present: Karen Shanley, Director of Human Resources

Ms. Shanley advised that she is before the Board this evening, as Mayor Sullivan made her aware of the existence of the Health & Wellness Committee and further that she is very interested in improving employee wellness.

She advised that from a health insurance perspective, wellness is an important factor in keeping the costs down for the health insurance, but good health is also important for the overall well-being of employees.

Ms. Shanley asked the Board how she can get involved with the Health & Wellness Committee in promoting wellness throughout the Town.

Dr. Nedelman advised that he is all for it. He asked how Braintree shapes up as far as health insurance premiums, as Ms. Shanley indicated there is a financial incentive for employees to be well. How is the health insurance based now, and what criteria is used?

Ms. Shanley advised that the Town of Braintree is singly self-insured for its health insurance. The Town sets their own premiums and employees can use Blue Cross Blue Shield and Harvard Pilgrim, as the third party administrators. So, the employees are insured through those two insurance companies, but the Town pays for the claims. Therefore, the Town's premiums are based on the wellness of the employees collectively.

The Town does have catastrophic insurance. So, for claims over \$ 100,000.00, the Town does have insurance to help with those claims.

Dr. Nedelman asked how the Town of Braintree usage compares to other towns.

Ms. Shanley advised that the Town of Braintree compares pretty favorably to surrounding towns in terms of what the per person cost is. However, the Town could do better and would like to do better because of the fact that the Town is self-insured. Anything that the Town does to make employees better, the Town benefits from.

Dr. Nedelman asked what does Ms. Shanley think can be improved.

Ms. Shanley advised that anyone who smokes, anyone who has hypertension. Maybe exercise would improve hypertension, employees getting more regular check-ups and preventive care.

Dr. Nedelman advised that the problem that physicians see now is that people are putting off preventative care because of increased deductibles, but do not get the mammogram or colonoscopy or procedures that have been recommended. What do you do about this?

Ms. Shanley advised that there is no co-pay now for preventative care, as part of the federal health insurance reform. So, those preventive things, you do not need a co-pay for an annual physical, a mammogram, a colonoscopy, PSA tests. The Town will pay for these.

Dr. Nedelman asked that what is expected is the costs for care will go up on one end, but the Town will try to keep it down by increasing health and wellness standards. He asked if all of the health and wellness initiatives done during the work day or are they done outside of the work day.

Ms. McGrath advised the Board that a draft employee health and wellness program, as well as survey was prepared by the Public Health Nurse and a student intern some four years ago. The program details have been provided to Ms. Shanley this evening.

Ms. Shanley advised that she has looked at the draft program and thinks it is excellent.

Ms. McGrath reminded the Board that a health and wellness survey was introduced over four years ago when Mayor Sullivan took office and he was interested in improved health for employees.

Dr. Nedelman advised that the problem he sees now is that physician's are actively involved in the AC2, which is quality assurance with the health insurance companies, with exactly the things that are part of preventative health. Physicians are getting reimbursed surpluses based on percentages of blood pressure, mammograms, colonoscopy, etc. The problem he sees in the Town is not keeping people who are motivated to stay healthy, but to get the ones who maybe start off healthy when they apply for the job and then become unhealthy, and to be able to do something about it. It is this problem that when the Board spoke to the Mayor some three to four years ago that the Board and Town had no control over because of contractual arrangements. How would these issues be addressed for the unhealthy and at risk employee, and how would the Town be able to get that person to change their patterns.

Ms. Shanley advised that there are two approaches. One is that the Town can address fitness for different individuals in a job that may involve high risk activities through the collective bargaining process, possibly negotiating certain standards. She feels that a program like this needs to target as many employees as possible, and the employees that are going to cooperate, as a first step. She further advised that for some individuals, no matter how good the incentive is, they are not motivated no matter what the incentive is.

Whereas, if you start out and get a certain percentage of individuals to cooperate and get healthier that is a small step, and from there the program can grow. You want to have some success at first.

Ms. McGrath advised the Board that there is a good number of employees that are already actively involved in improving their health, and many involved in walking programs, fitness clubs, weight watchers programs, etc.

Ms. Shanley agreed.

The Board members and Ms. Shanley further discussed the subject of employee/Town health and wellness.

Ms. Shanley asked about the status of the Health & Wellness Committee.

Mrs. Dowd and Dr. Nedelman advised Ms. Shanley that the committee is basically in-operative at this point. Four of the members are the Board of Health members and Ms. McGrath who are present and available for every Board of Health meeting. Mr. Corcoran has recently resigned for personal reasons, and Mr. Pratt only attended one meeting some three plus years ago. Given these facts, Mrs. Dowd and Dr. Nedelman advised that they would have to re-consider whether they would want to remain on this defunct committee.

Ms. Shanley indicated that it may be a good idea to have Town departments represented on such a committee.

Dr. Nedelman asked if Ms. Shanley would consider working on implementing the program and then come back to the Board with updates. He is all for the survey/program and overall wellness of the employees.

Ms. Shanley advised that she would be happy to move this forward and return to the Board to update them on the progress in the future.

Ms. McGrath advised Ms. Shanley that she will forward the survey to her for review.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- Mr. Jim Stage introduced himself to the Board, and advised that he is a Braintree resident and registered nurse and diabetes educator. He works at Harvard Vanguard. He asked if the Town has a sharps needle program.

Ms. McGrath provided the details of the department's sharps program to Mr. Stage.

The Board and Mr. Stage spoke more about diabetes and diabetes concerns in general.

- Dr. Nedelman asked if about the status of the high school pool/rinks, as he heard it may be opened by the fall.

Mrs. Dowd advised that is unlikely, as it is just going out to bid now.

- Mrs. Hubbard advised that with the mild winter and early spring, that people are approaching her, including at school, indicating they are seeing mosquito activity. She inquired if the Norfolk County Mosquito Control Project may be able to spray the school grounds earlier this year.

Ms. McGrath advised that she would contact Norfolk County Mosquito Control Program to ask about Mrs. Hubbard's inquiry.

**Motion By:** Dr. Nedelman to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm.  
**Second By:** Mrs. Hubbard