



## TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE BOARD OF HEALTH

Aldrich School Town Hall Annex - 14 Hill Street  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
Phone# (508) 234-3272 Fax# (508) 234-0821

*The Northbridge Board of Health approved these minutes at a meeting held October 13, 2015.*

### MEETING MINUTES - July 28, 2015

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This meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Mr. Paul McKeon, Chairman. Other members present were Mr. Scott Chase and Mr. Chris Cella. Mr. Steve Garabedian and Ms. Lani Criasia were absent. Also present was Jeanne M. Gniadek, Administrator.

**Reorganization of Board of Health:** *This matter was tabled due to lack of a full Board.*

**Minutes:** Motion made by Mr. Cella to accept the minutes of **June 9, 2015**. Motion seconded by Mr. McKeon; the vote was 2-0 in favor. Mr. Chase abstained.

Motion made by Mr. Chase to accept the minutes of **July 14, 2015**. Motion seconded by Mr. McKeon; the vote was 2-0 in favor. Mr. Cella abstained.

**Composting Facility – Saugus, MA – Site Visit:** Mr. McKeon and Mr. Chase conducted a site visit to a composting facility in Saugus, MA the morning of July 28, 2015. Mr. McKeon stated that he contacted the facility prior to arranging this site inspection and was told that the owner would be happy to give them a tour any day except Mondays (due to how busy they are) or Fridays (because the owner is not there).

Mr. McKeon also stated that he spoke with the Board of Health Agent in Saugus who informed him that the complaints have actually gone down since the composter was installed noting that prior composting on-site was windrow composting.

Mr. McKeon stated that the site was all open dumping. He was impressed with the engineering capabilities accomplished by the owner, a farmer, and his son. He stated that there was little to no smell on the property. He did not observe any fans or bio-filters. Mr. McKeon stated that they are involved in a pilot program with the town of Chelsea, processing garbage from 600 households. He observed the open pile of garbage from those households. Stated that it was wide open and the smell was miniscule.

Mr. McKeon stated that there are two composting tumblers, side by side, and that each are about 40-feet long. These composters were home-made; designed by the son. He stated that the motor that turns the drum is just 5 HP and there was very little noise.

Mr. McKeon stated that they have a contract with Saugus for leaves and that they do not use wood chips, the owner noting that the wood chips are too valuable to be used in the composting operation.

Mr. McKeon stated that the product that comes out of the tumblers looks like loam, except that it requires screening to remove the plastic products that are mixed in.

Mr. Chase stated that it was a warm and humid day and that it had rained the night before. Stated that they walked around for an hour and that he noted very little smell. He also noted that there was no accumulation of any debris on their shoes, despite the rain the night before. Mr. Chase had taken several pictures which he shared with the Board.

Mr. McKeon stated that this was a 200 head pig farm but now they only keep about 40 pigs on the farm. He stated that it did not smell like a pig farm.

Mr. Paul Buma questioned where the liquids from the tumblers is going. Mr. McKeon responded that he did not see any fluids leaving the tumblers. Mr. Buma commented that the product is suppose to have 60% moisture retention going into composter and when it comes out it's suppose to be at 150° F – that moisture would produce vapor and CO2. He questioned what the toxicity of the vapor was that is spewing out into the air, expressing concern about the proximity of this vapor to someone's home.

Mr. McKeon stated that these composting tumblers appear to be home-made and that they are solid not perforated. Mr. Chase noted that he saw one fan hooked up to remove air from the drum and that it went into a pile of wood chips.

Ms. Shelley Buma questioned whether Mr. McKeon and Mr. Chase had gone into the community to speak with residents noting that articles written in 2012 and 2014 had documented numerous complaints about odors and seagulls from area residents.

Mr. McKeon stated that he spoke with the Board of Health inspector in Saugus who has been in his position for the last 12 years. This inspector stated to him that they don't get that many complaints anymore.

Ms. Buma stated that she had spoken with residents of Gia, Brianna, and Indian Rock Drive to ask them how it is now. She stated that residents told her that they just put up with it now noting that some days there is no odor and other days they have to close their windows.

Mr. Buma asked how far this composter was from property lines. Mr. McKeon stated he was unsure but noted that it was on 50 acres. He estimated that the closest house was probably 200-300 yards away. Ms. Buma stated that through Google Earth she estimated the distance at 800 to 1800 feet.

Mr. Chase noted that during this site visit today it was not breezy at all and he still did not detect any strong odors.

Mr. McKeon noted that the equipment used in Saugus is pretty primitive and it was working real well. The Douglas Road proposal is suppose to be state of the art.

The Board was asked if they receive deliveries every day. Mr. McKeon replied that he believes that they are closed on Sundays and may only be open for a half-day on Saturdays which might explain why Mondays are a busy day for them.

**Non-Windrow Composting Facilities - Regulations:** The Board reviewed the email response from Town Counsel regarding adoption of local regulations governing non-windrow composting facilities. Mr. McKeon noted that he needed more time to digest what was in the response.

Ms. Buma, who obtained a copy of Town Counsel's email response at this meeting, noted that Counsel has told the Board that they can promulgate a regulation but that the regulation needs to be reasonable. She also noted that counsel indicated to the Board that if they establish a setback they need to give a reason and that they cannot prohibit composting.

Mr. McKeon replied that the establishment of a 3,000-foot setback would essentially eliminate any composting facilities in Northbridge. Mr. McKeon requested that Ms. Gniadek research "nuisance" laws and to report her findings back to the Board to see if the nuisance laws could be applied to a composting operation if a problem arises.

Ms. Buma asked the Board to consider setting a date for a public hearing to consider adopting local regulations governing non-windrow composting facilities, noting that this is an urgent matter. Mr. McKeon responded that he would like that to be a decision of the entire Board noting that they did not have 2 members present this evening. He also wanted time to review the reply of town counsel.

**2528 Providence Road – Failed On-Site Sewage Disposal System:** Mr. McKeon informed the Board that he stopped at this property to speak with the owners regarding their septic system and the complaint we received from NSTAR when they went to turn the gas on. NSTAR employees noted raw sewerage in the crawl space in the basement and refused to turn the gas on. Mr. McKeon informed the Board that an old abandoned well is being used as a cesspool. He stated that the owners have acknowledged that the system is in failure. The property is being foreclosed on and they are looking for alternate housing. Mr. McKeon informed them that they will need to pump the system as often as necessary so that this does not become a public health hazard.

**Motion made by Mr. Chase to issue Notice of Non-Compliance due to the septic system being in failure allowing 2 years, per Title 5 regulations, to complete the repair of the system and that in the meantime the owners will need to pump the system every month and to provide records of these pump outs to the Board of Health office. Mr. McKeon seconded this motion adding that the basement area crawl space where raw sewerage has collected must also be pumped out. The vote on this motion as amended was all in favor.**

**Citizens' Forum:** *No one present for Citizen's Forum.*

**Old & New Business:** *None.*

**Correspondence:** The following correspondence was distributed to the Board:

- *Memorandum – RE: Fall Annual Town Meeting: October 27, 2015*
- *Email from Matthew Claudio regarding bats. (Mr. McKeon noted that many bats are protected as they are endangered. He also noted that many wildlife animals have the potential to carry rabies and that you cannot simply eradicate them.)*

*There being no further business, motion to adjourn at 8:20 PM was made by Mr. Chase and seconded by Mr. Cella – all in favor. .*

*Attested by,*

*Jeanne M. Gniadek, Administrator*

List of Documents utilized by Board of Health  
Meeting Date: July 28, 2015

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*Committee Organization Form*

A. DRAFT Meeting Minutes

1) June 9, 2015

2) July 14, 2015

B. Non-Windrow Composting Facilities

3) BOH Agenda – Site Visit – Saugus, MA; photos

4) Emails: Kopelman & Paige to Jeanne Gniadek & Paul McKeon (July 28, 2015) and Email: Jeanne Gniadek to Kopelman & Paige (July 20, 2015)

C. Title 5 – On Site Sewage Disposal

5) 2528 Providence Road – No documents

D. Old & New Business

E. Citizens' Forum – Article 7 – Town Charter

F. Correspondence

6) Memorandum RE: Fall Annual Town Meeting

7) Email: Matthew Claudio re: Bat Infestation in Middle School