

**Town of Dover  
Board of Health, June 14, 2004**

The regular monthly meeting of the Dover Board of Health was held in Town Hall, 37 N. Sussex Street, Dover.

Board President Marie Hoffman called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and announced that the meeting complies with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act and has been duly advertised and posted.

Board President Marie Hoffman called the roll.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Constance Sibona-Foster, Jean Cater, Marie Hoffman,  
Karen Vaughan, Ramiro Gomez

**ABSENT:** Christopher Chapman, Donna Cook

**ALSO PRESENT:** Donald Costanzo, Health Officer

President Hoffman called for a motion to accept the minutes from the May 2004 Regular Meeting of the Board of Health.

**A motion to accept the minutes from the May 2004 Regular Meeting of the Board of Health** was made by Karen Vaughan and duly seconded by Constance Foster.

**ALL AYES; NO NAYS.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

President Hoffman asked the HO if there was any correspondence of significance.

The HO stated that there was no correspondence.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The Health Officer (HO) distributed the monthly report to the Board.

Garbage tonnage for May 2004 was 496.9 tons; down from the same month one-year ago by 4.84 tons or 1%.

Garbage sticker receipts for May 2004 were \$3,725.00; up from the same month one-year ago by \$612.00 or 20%.

The HO updated the Board on the matter of 19 Audrey Place and animal cruelty. On June 8<sup>th</sup> the matter was concluded in municipal court. The case dates back to March 25<sup>th</sup>, when the HO visited the dwelling to find that a pit bull dog was confined in a locked shed all day with no windows for light.

The HO contacted the Animal Control Officer who responded the same day and impounded the dog. The NJ Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) filed a cruelty complaint against the dog owners and the matter will be heard in court on Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>.

In conclusion, the defendant was fined a total of \$2,141.00 (\$1,081 of which was retribution to veterinarian; \$530 + \$530); 30 days of community service (15 + 15); and, 5 days jail.

At last month's meeting, the Board directed the HO to research ordinances that limit the number of dogs from other communities for the next meeting. The HO distributed copies of the animal control ordinance and samples of dog limiting ordinances for the Board to review.

The HO also stated that as a companion to a dog limiting ordinance, the definition of a kennel should also be changed to reflect the limited number of dogs permissible per household. A sample of a kennel definition was also distributed to the Board.

The Board discussed the issue of limiting the number of dogs and the amendment of existing animal control ordinance. The principle issue was determining the number of dogs permitted per household.

Constance Foster felt that permitting five dogs was too many given property issues such as small lot sizes, barking, noise, and animal waste problems.

Marie Hoffman suggested limiting the number of dogs to two per household.

Karen Vaughan stated that two dogs may be too limiting, particularly if the animals are small.

Constance Foster recommended two dogs per household because of the close proximity of houses in Dover, and other quality of life issues relating to dogs such as barking, dogs running loose and dogs defecating on private property.

Karen Vaughan stated that she felt that two dogs was too restrictive and thought that even three dogs per household was too low. Ms. Vaughan questioned whether the number of dogs per household presented a serious problem in town.

The HO stated that animal control problems regularly occur and that, in some cases, animal waste issues and foul odors was exacerbated by keeping several dogs.

Ramiro Gomez commented that he had seen dogs in the flea market and felt that it posed a safety issue with small children and people in crowds.

Karen Vaughan expressed interest in knowing how many households had three or more dogs in Dover. The HO responded that a computer search of the dog licensing database could be conducted. Ms. Vaughan again stated that she felt that a two dog limit was too restrictive.

Constance Foster felt that a proactive approach to preventing dog related nuisances by limiting the number of dogs per household now was important.

Following a general discussion of limiting the number of dogs per household in Dover, and reframing the problems associated with keeping several dogs such as *limited property size and close proximity to neighbors, quality of life issues that relate to barking dogs & noise issues and dog feces & odors:*

**A motion to amend Chapter 113, “Animals”, to limit the number of dogs that a person or household or business, firm or corporation can own, keep or harbor to no more than two dogs** was made by Constance Foster and seconded by Marie Hoffman.

**3 AYES; 1 NAY.** The motion was carried.

The HO was instructed to draft an amended animal ordinance that reflects the two dog limit for Board review at next month’s meeting.

The HO also informed Jean Cater that a Dog Waste Sign was installed on the downhill side of Prospect Street as requested.

The HO informed the Board that the following programs were conducted over the past month:

- Tobacco Prevention at Dover Middle School: May 13<sup>th</sup>; 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders; 5 sessions; coordinated with Rick Johnson, SAC Counselor, Dover Public Schools.
- Medication Management for Seniors: May 18<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00 pm; Dover Housing Authority, 215 E. Blackwell Street; pharmacist from Goodale’s present; nurse present to take blood pressure.
- Female Cancer Screening program on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

- Healthy Heart Program for Kids & Germ Busters: May 26<sup>th</sup>; Dover Child Care.
- Cholesterol Screening Program: June 5<sup>th</sup>; Courtroom.
- Smallpox Tabletop Exercise: May 26<sup>th</sup>; health officials, hospitals & emergency management.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The HO informed the Board that he has been posting the approved Board of Health minutes on the Town of Dover web site. Also, a new page summarizing various fees for services was posted on the web site. The HO asked the Board if anyone had any thoughts about additions to the web site.

Constance Foster stated that she had researched other web sites and made copies of pages that were interesting and related to health. Ms. Foster gave the material to the HO for review.

On June 3, the HO attended a dedication ceremony at Saint Clare's Hospital in Dover announcing a new mobile outreach hospital designed to provide primary healthcare to the homeless, indigent and uninsured. The program has been in effect since July 2000 and has served more that 2200 client contacts saving over \$1.4 million in charity care.

The HO announced that the Town of Dover was currently in the process of conducting a dog and cat census that is required by law. The primary purposes of the licensing law are to insure that cats and dogs are vaccinated for rabies and to raise funds to support animal control activities.

Cats, particularly, have a higher risk of rabies due to increased exposure to wildlife. Therefore, making sure a cat is vaccinated against rabies is very important. Recently, a domestic cat in Somerset County contracted rabies requiring family members and contacts to get vaccinated. A complicating issue was raised when officials discovered that the cat had given birth to kittens several weeks before. Health official now were faced with the difficult task of tracing the kitten and their contacts as well.

In another matter, the HO stated that the NJ Domestic Partnership Act becomes effective July 11<sup>th</sup>. The new law grants legal status to same sex couples over 18 and opposite sex couples over 62. The Act entitles domestic partners to certain rights and benefits that married people have such as health & retirement benefits and tax benefits.

The health department has not received the new “Affidavit of Domestic Partnership” application yet so uncertainties remain about the procedures for properly completing the application.

**THE MEETING WAS OPENED TO BOARD MEMBERS WHO WISHED TO DISCUSS A PARTICULAR ISSUE.**

Constance Foster noted in her review of the minutes of last month’s meeting that Alderman Camacho had put on hold a search for an alternate location for the Missionaries of God to dispense food to the homeless.

Ms. Foster asked if the town was continuing to look for an alternate location and stressed the importance of working on this matter until it is resolved since it continues to be an issue.

Constance Foster also noted that at last month’s meeting the HO was asked to check with the Code Enforcement Department about the status of the dumpster area at Dover Hills Apartments.

The HO stated that the Code Enforcement Department assigned an inspector to check on the garbage containment area of Dover Hills Apartments on a regular basis. A copy of the department’s inspections was shown to Ms. Foster and indicated that the dumpster area was reasonably maintained.

Ms. Foster also mentioned that the dumpster enclosure at the Scott Dickerson dental office on E. Dickerson Street was in poor repair. The HO stated her would refer the matter to the Code Enforcement Department.

Constance Foster raised another issue relating to an unlicensed dog brought to her attention by Sandra Scarneo of First Street. Sandra Scarneo questioned why the HO did not immediately issue a summons to the dog owner.

The HO stated that he promptly responded to Ms. Scarneo’s complaint and sent a notice to the property owner where the dog was kept. The notice gave the property owner one week to license the dog. The HO was under the impression that this action was satisfactory to Ms. Scarneo and was not aware of any problem with the way the complaint was handled.

In another matter, Constance Foster brought up the subject of window screens in apartments and properties throughout Dover. Many residents do not have screens posing a safety risk. The HO explained that whenever there is a change of occupancy, a Certificate of Compliance inspection is done on an apartment or house by a housing inspector. At the time of the inspection, if screens are missing, the property owner is cited for the deficiency. Therefore, new buyers or renters take occupancy of a house or apartment with windows that have screens.

After tenants move in, it is often the case that the screens are removed, possibly because some people feel that they obstruct the flow of air. The removal of screens by tenants is very common and is the type of behavior that can not be effectively controlled. Since the matter is housing related, it should be brought to the attention of the Code Enforcement Department .

Karen Vaughan briefly mentioned that in addition to the safety issue of having no screens on windows, mosquitoes and other biting insects pose a health risk particularly with West Nile Virus.

In an unrelated matter, Karen Vaughan mentioned hearing that there was a growing problem of prostitution in Dover. Apparently, taxi cabs are bringing this activity into Town. The Board responded that this was a police matter and that such problems should be reported to the police when they are observed.

**THE MEETING WAS OPENED TO MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC  
WHO WISHED TO DISCUSS A PARTICULAR ISSUE.**

Kay Walker of Dover Park Plaza Condominiums introduced herself and stated that she was present to inform the Board that the sidewalks on Blackwell Street were littered and messy. The HO explained the newly re-organized office of Code Enforcement and Inspections was responsible for overseeing most garbage related complaints. Although the matter will be referred to that department, the HO suggested that Ms. Walker bring the complaint to their attention.

Constance Foster stated that before the creation of the Code Enforcement and Inspection's Department, the Board of Health provided a forum for complaints such as this.

Upon completion of the public portion of the meeting, President Hoffman entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. **A motion to adjourn the meeting** was made by Jean Cater and seconded by Constance Foster.

**ALL AYES; NO NAYS**

**MEETING ADJOURNED**