

September 14, 2023
Sterling Board of Health Meeting
Butterick Building, Room 205
1 Park Street, Sterling, MA 01564

Meeting Minutes

6:00 PM Chairman Allen Hoffman called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Allen Hoffman, Chairman – present
Anne Marie Catalano, Member – present
Cathie Martin, Member – present
David Favreau, Health Agent – present
Elaine Heller, Administrative Assistant – present

Attendees: Marcia Culhane, Gail Hassett, Laura Ricci, Jack Maloney, Matthew Lewis,
Don Brown, Janis Brown, and Michael Padula

General Business Updates:

Approve Any Available Minutes: August 3 and 15, 2023:

A motion to approve revised minutes of the August 3, 2023 meeting was made by Hoffman and seconded by Catalano. Roll call vote: Hoffman - aye; Catalano - aye. Motion carried. Ms. Martin abstained as she was not present at that meeting.

A motion to approve revised minutes of the August 15, 2023 meeting was made by Martin and seconded by Catalano. Roll call vote: Martin - aye; Catalano - aye; Hoffman - aye. With all in favor, the motion carried.

Health Agent Report: Public bathing beach testing 8/15 and 8/16; September 5, 2023 Public Records Appeal Request:

The numbers for beach testing have been up and down. On 8/15, there was a high bacteria count of 308, which appeared to be a false reading. On 8/16 the count was 78. Testing is now complete for the season.

Commonwealth of Mass. Public Records Division received a letter appealing the response of the Town of Sterling to a recent public records request. The original public records request had been completed in full; there are no further public records available.

Title 5 inspections are being tracked. Since January 1, 2023, there have been 46 inspections. Of the 46, 16 did not meet the new regulation requirements and required an observation hole. Of the 16, 2 failed and were determined to be in the groundwater.

Signatures Required: completed

DPH - Interagency Updates:

According to Ms. Martin, EEE has been identified in the Douglas/Southbridge area, although none in humans. Ms. Catalano noted there are now 6 towns in the high-risk category.

Ms. Martin provided links for safety tips for specific threats and hazards, after the recent flooding in the area, which can be found under the website [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov).

Appointments and Agenda Items:

Variance Request; 140 North Row Road:

Sterling Subsurface Sewage Disposal Regulations: Reg. IV.g., Leaching facilities 0-1,499 GPD shall be constructed with the following minimum 4-foot separation distance to estimated seasonal high groundwater (3 feet separation is proposed). Reg. IV. a., Leach beds to be 1000 square feet minimum, with 12" of stone beneath the pipes (640 sq. ft. provided).

Local Upgrade Request: 310 CMR 15.405 (1)(h): Reduction of the required 4-foot separation between the bottom of the leach area and the estimated seasonal high groundwater (3-foot separation provided between the bottom of the leach area and the estimated seasonal high groundwater). Reg. IV.a., Leach beds to be 1000 square feet minimum, with 12" of stone beneath the pipes (756 sq. ft. of Presby type system provided with no stone beneath pipes).

Engineer Jack Maloney of Dillis and Roy presented this variance request. This home has a 1500-gallon tank with a failed system, to be replaced with a Presby system. Health Agent Favreau has reviewed the plans and found them to be acceptable. After review, Martin made a motion to approve the variances as presented and Catalano seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Martin - aye; Catalano - aye; Hoffman - aye. With all in favor, the motion carried.

Discuss Revisions to Local Subsurface Disposal Regulation:

This regulation pertains to old systems installed prior to 1995. The purpose of the regulation is to determine that the bottom of the leach field is not in the groundwater, resulting in contamination.

After Board members discussed these revisions, it was agreed to present the following changes at a to-be-scheduled public hearing:

"Estimated Seasonal High Groundwater (ESHGW) must be determined through a soil evaluation observation hole by a DEP-approved soil evaluator and witnessed by a member of the Sterling Board of Health and/or their Agent. Results of any soil evaluation observation holes will be assumed to be representative of the conditions within a circular area having a radius of 40 feet and whose center is at the site of the soil evaluation observation hole. If a soil evaluation subsequent to 1995 has not previously been conducted on the site within the area of the soil absorption system, then a current soil evaluation must be performed and witnessed by the Health Agent or Alternate Inspector. Estimated seasonal groundwater tests conducted prior to April 1995 are no longer considered to be valid and new tests using the soil evaluation method must be conducted. For these lots a new soil evaluation observation hole must be dug to demonstrate that the ESHGW level lies below the bottom of the soil absorption system".

Review of Future Agenda Items and Meeting Date:

The next meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2023, in Room 205, at 6:00 PM.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made by Martin and seconded by Catalano. All members were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.