



Washtenaw County Board of Health

Minutes

Special Meeting RE: Pollution Prevention Program

February 11, 2022, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
LRC. 4135 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, MI, 48108
Michigan Room

Present: James Carty, Gina Dahlem, Leon Golson, Justin Hodge, Carrie Rheingans, Katie Scott, Kathleen Stroud, Elisabeth Vanderpool

Absent: Morghan Williams Boydston

Staff: Jimena Loveluck, Kristen Schweighoefer, Ruth Kraut, Russell O'Brien

Guests:

1. Call to Order

Justin Hodge called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Roll-call check-in.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Board Member Response to Public Comment

None.

4. Approval of Agenda (Action)

Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by K. Scott, to approve the agenda.

Motion approved unanimously.

5. Pollution Prevention Program – Kristen Schweighoefer

Kristen Schweighoefer discussed the proposed pause to the Pollution Prevention Program. She reviewed the proposed pause, discussed the guidance from Corporation Counsel, gave a timeline for approval from the Board of Commissioners (BOC), and went over communications with the regulated community.

Carrie Rheingans asked if the Health Department (HD) would be held liable for not doing inspections if an incident should occur. Kristen replied that is her understanding from Corporation Counsel. Complaints would still be followed up on even if the program is put on hold. Lawsuits could occur if the regulation is in place or not. A bigger issue would be if the regulation is in place and the HD was not following the regulation.

Justin Hodge asked if the State is doing anything for regulating these items. Kristen replied that the State does some around air quality as well as chemical storage and handling. Those regulations, along with federal regulations are still in place.

Katie Scott asked how much of the program came out of concerns about Gelman. Kristen said that the program came from the Community Right to Know Program, so it was Statewide legislation that led to the Pollution Prevention Program.





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Kristen said the Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) is one of the many partners they want to review the regulations to determine what they need out of it.

Motion by L. Golson, seconded by K. Stroud, to recommend a pause on the Pollution Prevention Program for 2 years. Motion approved unanimously.

6. Health Officer Update

Jimena Loveluck shared that the Local Public Health Orders will be rescinded at the end of February. She has been working with several other health officers with existing orders in place, as well as Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) on priorities for 2022. A coordinated communication plan was in order, but Ingham County made their announcement yesterday. Washtenaw County will be issuing a press release today announcing the end to the orders on February 28th. Washtenaw County is one of the best counties for vaccination rates of school age individuals.

Carrie Rheingans talked about how the youngest members of the community still can't be vaccinated and many of them have siblings in schools. She said she is worried that they could still be at risk and Omicron is spreading rapidly in the unvaccinated. Carrie suggested rescinding the mask order in April once the youngest can be vaccinated and the weather warms up for better ventilation in schools. She also asked about in school ventilation minimum standards. Jimena responded that the recommendation continues to be in support of universal masking and that will stay in the school guidance. The HD will continue to work closely with schools on isolation and quarantine. She also anticipates some school districts will continue the mask mandate.

Katie Scott said the rates are lower in schools because they are wearing masks and pointed to a study that showed school districts that have a mask mandate are 3.5 times better protected. She thinks this will be a signal to the public that mask mandates are done and could think we are done with the pandemic. The mask mandate is a symbol and signal of how seriously we are taking this in our community. Katie shared she thinks this is too early and would like to continue the mandate until the case rate goes down in the state. She also said it is a mixed message to push the use of KN95 masks one week and then remove the school mask requirement the next week.

James Carty said that he is worried that there could be actions at the state level to take power away unless we show a willingness to react as circumstances change. The HD reinforces its credibility with the public when it shows it can change as circumstances change. He does have concerns the HD would be under pressure not to reinstate a mask mandate if circumstances worsened, but he has confidence the HD would act under pressure or not.

Gina Dahlem said her concern is the messaging the public will receive. There was a big push to get KN95 masks out in the community and now the mask mandate is being lifted. Gina asked about timing. Jimena replied that the Local Public Health Orders will be rescinded on February 28th. This is the only setting where masks are required through a Public Health Order. The recommendation all along has been that everyone wear a mask in indoor public places and that continues.

Elisabeth Vanderpool commented that the HD could put out more communication, support, and education around kids under 5 that can't be vaccinated.

Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by J. Carty, to say the BOH supports staff decisions to reevaluate mask requirements. Motion approved unanimously.



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7. Adjournment

*Motion by K. Stroud, seconded by G. Dahlem, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion approved unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 AM.

Minutes taken by Russell O'Brien