

**TOWNSEND BOARD OF HEALTH**

272 Main Street

Townsend, Massachusetts 01469

***Christopher Nocella, Chairman James Le’Cuyer, Vice-Chairman Gavin Byars, Clerk***

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**October 29, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., EST**

**Meeting Room 2 at Memorial Hall**

**272 Main Street, 1st Floor**

This meeting of the Board of Health will be held in-person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting.

Please note that, while an option for remote attendance and/or participation is being provided as a courtesy to the public, the meeting will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law.

Members of the public with particular interest in any specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person versus virtual attendance accordingly.

**Dial-in number:** 605-313-4278 **Access code:**5843884 PIN

**Online meeting ID:** cwalter17

# PRELIMINARIES

* 1. Roll Call
  2. Additions or Deletions not anticipated 48 hours in advance

APPOINTMENT/HEARINGS

* 1. PUBLIC HEARING: 3-Wheeler Road: In accordance with MGL Chapter 111, Section 143, The nature of the hearing is to consider the petition of Shepherd Farm seeking Site Assignment for a poultry processing plant (slaughterhouse) at 3-Wheeler Road, West Townsend, MA. 01474
  2. CO-VID Update
  3. 96 Fitchburg Road – Manure Management Plan
  4. Other permits for review

WORK SESSION

* 1. Invoices
  2. Minutes of September 2021
  3. Recycling Center Updates
  4. Future Agenda Items
     1. Stable Regulations Update – Work Session November
     2. Septic Regulations Update – Work Session December
     3. Friday, 11/12/21 2021 9:30a.m. - TBD

ADJOURNMENT

**Townsend Board of Health Minutes October 29th, 2021**

* 1. 9:34 Call the meeting to Order. All present.
  2. Additions/Deletions Upgrade 5 North End Road was added to the agenda.
  3. **Public Hearing: A MOTION was made by CN to open the meeting, JL 2nd Meeting opened at 9:36 a.m. MGL Section 143 is read into record**. Site Assignment for a Poultry Processing Plant at 3-Wheeler Road in West Townsend. Gavin Byars informed the Board he performed a site walk on the property along with Rick Metcalf and Carla Hitzenbuhler. He asked how many birds will be processed on site and the future for the plant. Gary Shepherd gave some background on the process. They have been raising turkeys for more than 10 years and the poultry plant has been there for 100 years from the early 1900’s. It is not their intent to create a Tyson or Perdue but the two plants they have used have closed as they do not have help. They are now working with the State and their cap at processing stops at 20,000. A USDA stamp would be needed if they go over, and they are striving for the stamp due to the standards of processing. Chicken is also in demand, 500 a week throughout April to October. We can process 500 an hour which would be 2 hours a week during summer months. They intent to capture the blood in processing lines in 5-gallon pales which goes to NY state to a rendering facility. Residue will end up in tanks and water which is a rinse water and goes to irrigation. They are doing organic manure management. They do not use chemicals. Waste gets mixed with manure and goes to the fields. They anticipate 5-7 pales of blood for the entire process this year. Veronica Kell asked if there is a different capacity if you have a federal permit. Tyson and Perdue are 12,000 an hour and they are not going there. The federal stamp is not for volume to them, but it is for a stamp that means its local and raises the level of sanitation. Veronica wants to know if 40 years later what is going to prevent the management changing the rules. Gary reminds Veronica it would be a stretch for the location and building to be able to accommodate that. They are a small enterprise permit. Gavin stated they could put a provision on their site assignment if they change the number to which Gary agrees. A resident asked about hours of operation. They do note the building is soundproof, but they are curious. Gary intended hours would be normal business hours and they do like to start early. It will not be an around the clock operation. Questions about other body parts. Offal will be shipped to a rendering plant they are not interested in bringing wildlife to the area. Veronica asked what other questions the Board of Health asked at the Site Walk. Gavin stated it was an involved hour-long conversation and he asked 50 – 75 questions. Examples of those questions were the limits of birds and blood waste, shipment of offal, composting, water in the rendering process, the scalding water and bath water and drains. He noted they still will need to discuss tight tanks for that process and where they are composting that water or spreading. Gary explained the water process with the birds once euthanized. This water is clean and will be going to the tight tank. Nonchemical water will be used as irrigation on field or an immediate location nearby. Gary explained the process if the power goes out with having several generators on the property.

Gavin asked about composting. Gary stated manure management and composting have not addressed feathers so he does not know if he will grind but noted it is encouraged put it in an organic manure. That process will take about a month. Gavin asked to compost on site only and for the arear be lined with plastic or specifically designed to manage the compost. This year there will be no composting. An abutter next door asked if anything is going into the ground. She is concerned with her well. Gary stated nothing is going into the ground or water. Abutter also concerned with traffic at intersection and smell, and the stream. There will be no additional traffic? Gary noted the average trailer carries 150 live turkeys which is 8 trucks a day. A stock trailer might go by, but plenty travel 119 east with the farms already. There will also be no smell. Gavin stated during the site walk everything was contained in the building. The building is set back from Route 119 as well. It is a clean process even in the parking lot he doubts there will be any dust. Gary stated the building will be red, as his other classic barns around town. Vice-Chairman Jim LeCuyer asked to speak his support of this and would like to move the process. Joan Savoy has many questions. She continues to ask about the numbers of birds. Gary reminds Joan the state has a cap of 20,000 and they would like to keep that number. Gary states their capacity will be under 20,000. Joan gives her professional background to which the Chair says is irrelevant. Gary states there will be no cross contamination. Joan asked if you are spraying blood on the field? Chair states those questions have already been answered. Reminds the public they are here for site assignment. Joan asked about the blood in the winter. Gary reminds Joan they will be done by Thanksgiving. Her understanding is the State will not approve without the Town giving the OK for the location. Gary agrees and states the State agreed this morning they are all ready to give their approval. Joan wants to know the composting location. She would like the Board to know the area there is sensitive water resources. Refrigerator containers will be used for transport. What if there is a storm and they lose power? Joan is reminded they already discussed having generators earlier. She however would like to have a condition in the Site Assignment to see the generators. She is concerned that the trucks cannot enter. Veronica is worried about the outstanding resource water, an area of critical concern. She feels other locations should be considered. Fields drained to Willard brook which go into the public water source. What makes this a suitable location? She wants the Board of Health to answer first and not the applicant. Gavin responded the nearest well station is down the street water had no concern. She has more concern with people who have wells. The river itself and the ground water. Will there be monitoring of Willard brook? Gavin states the Board has no plan to monitor. He reminds the public everything is contained in the building there is no way for hazard to leach out of building. They will have a composting specific area and offal shipped out of state. In terms of anything in the facility contaminated the water way he does not see any way. She still wants to monitor now so they can be ensured. Wants baseline of monitoring done now and followed up on an annual basis. If there is a problem, you need to be able to trace. Gavin does not agree. If there is a problem how you can trace it by to that place?? Gary points out they just replaced the water line west 2 years ago because the pipe was broken down and ECOLI was getting into the water line from the septic systems failing and leaching. He would welcome and gladly pay for any monitoring but respectfully requests that many other testing be done such as flostphas fertilization posterities from lawn care. Average person can use these in ways the applicant cannot.

Gary reminds the public all water on Route 119 and everything that backs up into the brook is going into that brook, so you need to include these things as well. Kevin Smith asked why the location is an issue. He states its far away from the brook. He noted if you put a septic system in the ground you have to be 5’ above the water table. Kevin thinks the table is around 40ft. Some of those septic’s in the area are as low as 2-3 feet. The chance of this leaching down is ridiculous and your putting stipulations on the applicant that are not necessary. Veronica and Gavin disagree about the location of the plant. Gavin stated there will be no monitoring. Veronica asked about other locations such as his farms around town. Gary stated he did look at other locations. The proposed location is near a major road, has 3 phase power and town water. He reminded the Board he is currently not using town water because he needs a filtering system due to the contaminated level are not at the approved state level. He noted the actual building it outside the ACEC area. Veronica disagrees. Kevin reminds the public this location has an existing poultry farm for over 100 years, and it is above the water table. There were 50,000 birds a year up there for many years. Gary is modernizing the facility. Kevin does not understand why this is such an issue. He is going through the permitting process seems they are trying to block Gary from doing business in town. A resident complained about the previous condition of the chicken farm. Andrew reminds the resident they are not raising the turkeys there. Jim Le’Cuyer reminds the public they cannot stop process and there are two other slaughterhouses in the area, and he is still in favor of the location. **Gavin Byars makes a MOTION to approve the Site Assignment for 3-Wheeler Road, West Townsend, with conditions that if there is a specific nuisance with odor, animals outside other than what you are harboring then the BOH can inspect. They also need a hauler permit, a composting/manure plan including a vegetated buffer zone and includes the maintenance plan for spraying fields and other locations if they are using the practice, basic manure practices, the approval of the waste tanks and where they are running off the water and the Board of Health members need to be able to inspect the tanks. Concluding the applicant needs to follow all the plumbing codes. Jim Le’Cuyer 2nd the MOTION. Discussion Joan Savoy asked if these stipulations are reasonable conditions and thanks everyone, she feels it was a useful meeting. Andrew agrees they are fine with all conditions. She reminds the Chair he did not treat her very well during the times she was asking questions. Voting 3/0. Chris Nocella makes a MOTION to close hearing. Jim Le’Cuyer 2nd. Voting 3/0 all in favor . Hearing closed at 10:32 a.m.**

* 1. COVID Update: Rick Metcalf reported to the Board numbers are down from 42 on 10/21 to 31 on 10/28/2021. Not a lot of change in individual numbers. 1-2% changes. He confirmed the booster shots can now be crossed. The Board asked how many vaccinations were given at the Devens clinic today. He knows it was a limited supply. Future clinics are having staffing issues. They discussed school clinics and did not have any preferences on the day of the week but stressed the importance of tracing the children. The Board asked Rick what his thoughts are on mask mandates. He explained its completely up to the Board. They discussed how to protect the town without the State guidelines. Gavin would like to see a procedure in place, so they do not keep changing the mandates.

The Board agreed a three-week period where numbers were below the old red category (25+ positive) then they could release but was unsure on the exact number below 25. Veronica asked about vaccination rates. Rick explained it is on the website.

* 1. The Board broke agenda to take item 1.10.3 Future Agenda Items. They updated their meeting schedules to 11/12, 11/22, 12/13 and 12/27. Next couple of weeks will be in the morning but then the Board will migrate to evening meetings again.
  2. 96 Fitchburg Road – Manure Management Plan. **A MOTION was made by JL and nd by GB to remove this item from our agenda temporarily. Voting 3/0 all in favor. MOTION carries.**
  3. 5 North End Road – Septic Upgrade: Septic has failed. **A MOTION was made by JL and 2nd by GB to approve the septic upgrade and permit for 4 North End Road. Voting 3/0 MOTION carries.**
  4. Invoices were signed as submitted.
  5. Meeting Minutes of September were approved as written.
  6. Recycling Center Update: Sean Pearson paperwork is all set for employment. Explained using Cemetery workers to help while he is learning and using if other employees can’t make it. Carla explained she continues to clean the area and get new containers to help alleviate the additional recycling that has been coming to the Center since the pandemic started.
  7. **A MOTION was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 by JL and 2nd by GB. Voting 3/0 MOTION carries.**