

MINUTES OF MEETING
DRAFT

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD
HAVEN WELL CONTAMINATION

Portsmouth City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue
Council Chambers

6:30pm

December 1, 2015

ATTENDEES:

Community Advisory Board

Rich DiPentima, Chairman

Robert Lister – Mayor - Portsmouth

James Heinz, Deputy Fire Chief - Portsmouth

Kim McNamara, Health Officer - Portsmouth

Andrea Amico, Resident - Portsmouth

Shelly Vetter, Owner - Discovery Child Enrichment Center – Pease Tradeport

Stefany Shaheen – City Councilor - Portsmouth

City Staff

Brian Goetz, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works – Portsmouth

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman DiPentima called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and presented the agenda for the evening. All members of the CAB were present.

2. AGENDA OVERVIEW AND PROCESS SUMMARY

Chairman DiPentima stated that this evening would be the last formal meeting of the CAB as a Board. He thanked CAB members for their dedication and hard work, Mayor Lister for his initiative and involvement, the public for their attendance and input at meetings, and for their participation in the process and the media for coverage of meetings. He stated that although there is much to be done, there has been a great deal of progress made in the seven months since the inception of the CAB. He stated that great strides have been made with CAB partners (DHHS, ATSDR, DES, EPA and the AF among others). There have been three major accomplishments in the past seven months, the first of which was the institution of the blood testing program (1500+ individuals). He stated that this was not easy to accomplish given the lack of labs across the United States that test for the contaminants in question at Pease Tradeport. Many thanks to the CDC who stepped in and stepped up for the testing the blood samples. Secondly, the work of CAB, Mr. Goetz and DPW in particular,

contributed to the negotiation of an agreement with the AF to treat not only the Haven Well, but also the Smith and Harrison Wells at Pease Tradeport. Senators Shaheen and Ayotte were also instrumental in getting the agreement into place. Building a relationship with ATSDR and the subsequent foundation for a study regarding the health effects attributable to PFC's was the third accomplishment. ATSDR has a strong commitment to the Pease Tradeport contamination issue and they will be working with DHHS to get a handle on the long-term health effects of PFC's. He assured community members that there will be ongoing communication with ATSDR.

There will be a condensed formal report highlighting activities of the CAB over the last seven months, most important of which is the recommendations of the CAB for the City Council and Mayor. The final presentation to the City Council and Mayor will be on December 21, 2015 at the City Council meeting at City Hall. Chairman DiPentima turned it over to the Mayor stating that it was the letter from the Mayor that established the CAB and formalized the charge of the group.

Mayor Lister thanked Chairman DiPentima for his leadership and stated that he has been impressed with the group and what it has accomplished. He thanked ATSDR, City of Portsmouth, AF, CDC and DHHS, as well as the residents of the Portsmouth. He stated that everyone, in spite of the subject matter being an emotionally charged one, has been civil and respectful. In his letter of April 23, 2015, he asked for a focus by the CAB on the following charges:

1. Act as liaison between the local affected community and DHHS
2. Represent the diverse voice of the community
3. Advise regarding appropriate methods and frequencies of communications between DHHS and the affected community
4. Participate in planning, recruitment and attendance at public meetings
5. Review blood testing results and provide input as to the future direction of the testing program

He stated that the City Council and Mayor are coming to the end of the 2-year term and he is looking forward to the presentation of recommendations at the City Council Meeting on December 21st, 2015. Even though the work of the CAB is coming to an end, and he appreciates all the work that went into serving on the committee, it is important to keep working together. He would like the opportunity to transition with the new Mayor to determine what the next steps will be. He is pleased that ATSDR is talking about a registry. Collaboration between the City and agencies should continue to be a part of the process; however the full weight of responsibility should be put on the City. In closing, he stated that he felt that one of biggest issues at this point was waiting for blood test results.

3. DISCUSS AND FINALIZE RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Chairman DiPentima asked members of the CAB to share their perspective on how ongoing communication (with DHHS and ATSDR) can be ensured regarding blood testing/results as well as the final report of all blood test results.

Ms. McNamara stated that she would like to see a strong recommendation that the community be educated about the broad exposure to chemicals and further, how they can protect themselves over time from the multitude of chemicals they are exposed to.

Chairman DiPentima inquired about who might conduct the education and how that might take place.

Ms. McNamara stated that the Environmental Working Group has a lot of information. She would like to research the matter a bit more.

Ms. Amico stated that Courtney Carignan may be able to help with this piece. She may already be doing something similar through Harvard.

Mayor Lister suggested having a committee/panel with a medical background.

Ms. McNamara stated that it would be helpful to have an environmental health doctor for children on the committee/panel. She inquired if there were any local environmental health physicians.

Chairman DiPentima stated that Dr. Robert McLellan, formerly of Exeter (now of Dartmouth) is one such doctor.

Councilor Shaheen stated that there seems to be two issues at hand; one of clean up and restoration of the aquifer, and the other of ongoing bio-monitoring to ensure that those that have not been notified do get notified, and ensuring that there is a database in place. Knowledge must be transferred to the new City Council and the need for an ongoing working relationship with ATSDR is critical. These issues seem to be at the crux of what the recommendations should be centered around.

Chairman DiPentima stated regarding the restoration piece, there is a mechanism in the process of being established now (RAB) that will address this. There will be representation on RAB from the CAB and the City, and perhaps DES. He stated that he is more comfortable with the first of the issues suggested by Councilor Shaheen than the second. He stated that he is willing to participate in a CAP, but not as Chairman.

Councilor Shaheen expressed interest in being involved with continuity from the CAB to a CAP. She wondered about the recommendation for a certain number of people to be on the committee/panel.

Mayor Lister felt that the recommendations should be more general in nature.

Councilor Shaheen recommended the formation of another community advisory committee of 5-7 members with expertise in certain areas that would work directly with ATSDR with continuity from the CAB to the new advisory committee

Ms. Amico would like community members to be part of the committee/panel.

Councilor Shaheen suggested that there is a representative for Pease Tradeport on the committee/panel, particularly one representing the childcare aspect of the issue.

Mayor Lister stated that he would like to work on formulating the recommendations rather than working on building committees.

Councilor Shaheen stated that her understanding from ATSDR was that there has to be a liaison to ATSDR to work on biomonitoring. Tying the hands of the new Mayor or Council is not what is desired.

Chairman DiPentima inquired as to whether there was any input from members of the audience.

Community member (Becky) - thanked the CAB and stated that the work the Committee has been doing is important. However, she did not agree with the assessment of the Mayor. She felt that a pat on the back was not due and stated that her family is stuck with this issue for life. Her fear was that the CAB will disband without a concrete plan. She did not understand the lax attitude around moving forward. While the CAB talked about not tying the hands of the new Mayor and City Council and making recommendations more of a general nature, she felt it was preferable to hold their feet to the fire so to speak. There must be a concrete plan of how to move forward before going home. It sounded to her as if a Board may, or may not, be formed by February, 2016. She stated that she does not have the power that the committee holds. She appreciated the fact that Chairman DiPentima, Councilor Shaheen and Ms. Amico plan to continue their efforts. She urged the CAB to see it through until the next committee is formed. She urged not waiting until the new Mayor and City Council get around to forming a Board next year. They will have plenty on their plates as it is.

Mayor Lister thanked Becky for voicing her perspective at meetings. He stated that those views have been and will continue to be welcome. He stated that the CAB has indeed accomplished some great things. Now is the time to discuss what is next. With an understanding of municipal government comes an understanding that at the end of every term, most, or all, committees end. The CAB cannot continue on because members of the Committee think it is a good idea to do so. If something is to continue with the new administration, the committee will be reappointed. This committee is not in a position to dictate what the next Council and Mayor will do or not do. He will transition with the new Mayor and the recommendations that are made.

Chairman DiPentima stated that he hears the concerns and understands where the Becky is coming from. However, he doesn't share those concerns. There will be an ongoing body that is very involved, even in the interim, and there most assuredly will be continuity.

Councilor Shaheen thanked Becky for making the points she brought forth. She shares the sense of urgency that action continues. The weight of the burden that families have had to bare has been significant. She assured the community that she is going to keep working on the issue. It is important to respond in the context of what can be done. Now that ATSDR will be at the table (which wasn't a certainty) and that the AF is on board with clean-up of the wells, things are progressing. There are federal partners to work with on what needs to be done. This is less about drawing a line in the sand that the work is done, and more about a transition. There is now a clear federal commitment, but there must be a handoff. The incoming Mayor and City Council are very concerned about the issue and are not going to forget about it. She stated that she will still be working on this issue in January and will work to ensure a seamless handoff.

Ms. Amico stated that this is an ongoing issue and that the process does not end tonight. She will not stop fighting for resolution. It is a good point in time to look at the work that has been done, and to then transition into the new group. Things are not stopping; it is an opportunity to make some changes.

Councilor Shaheen stated that when the process began, the CAB was working hard to get people screened. This wasn't an easy process, but since then, 2000 people have signed up to be screened. It was an unknown whether the AF would agree to clean up all 3 wells and it wasn't a known yet whether ATSDR was willing to be at the table. Progress has been made and things are changing for the better. The involvement of these agencies brings resources to bear that wouldn't otherwise be present. She felt that it would be beneficial to give the new City Council a perspective on where the process started, what progress has been made with a follow-up of the recommendations for proceeding/continuing.

Chairman DiPentima stated that it was his goal to provide that perspective to the City Council and affirmed that the CAB has had no regulatory authority.

Councilor Shaheen stated that she felt that the real power came from the community from those that spoke up and stated that things must change. Had it not been for the 300 parents and the AF that showed up, the biomonitoring piece may not have been a part of the process. Perhaps it can be thought of in terms of progress made rather than accomplishments.

Chairman DiPentima stated that the unknown contributes to uncertainty and fear. Establishment of mechanisms for forward progress is needed to allay those fears.

Community member (Elaine) stated that she felt that there hasn't been a lot of discussion at the meetings around timing and how soon the change that is now upon us might happen. The community members are not privy to what goes on behind the scenes. The disbanding of the CAB felt abrupt. There will be a period of time where there will not be a group formed. She didn't understand how communication was going to happen in the absence of the CAB. She does not want to lose sight of progress made so far.

Chairman DiPentima stated that Elaine presented very reasonable and good questions. He acknowledged that there will be a short hiatus. However, this did not mean that all

communication would stop. Ms. McNamara will continue to be a key liaison between DHHS and ATSDR. He will also provide input and continuity. Dialogue and communication will be maintained. There may not be a lot of activity in the interim. DHHS will release the blood test results to individuals, but the larger discussion of results probably will not happen until spring. In addition, ATSDR has a lot of pre-work in designing the study.

Elaine stated that she was still unclear how information will be communicated to the community in the interim. She did not want the communication with the community to stop.

Ms. McNamara stated that perhaps it could be made a priority to appoint the new Committee as soon as possible after the new administration takes office. The transition is in January and if the new committee is formed at that time, it would ensure a limited amount of time without a committee. She affirmed the time it would take ATSDR to gather information and statistics such as who was at Pease during a certain period of time or whether places at Pease Tradeport, such as the Discovery Child Enrichment Center, has information going back 12 years regarding the children that were on base. The Portsmouth Health Department is in frequent contact with DHHS in regards to matters of health. Some of the information is confidential, some of it is public. If anything should come about regarding the blood test results, the information would be made available to community members. Regarding communication between CAB members, what is discussed at the meetings and what is contained in the meeting minutes is about the extent of the communication between CAB members. There are not emails or conference calls that are not public. This process is an open and public process.

Ms. Amico brought up the point that when people get results back it causes unrest. CAB should be prepared for that. People will be frustrated and will need answers. She also wondered about making it a priority (in the recommendations) that the next Board be formed by a certain date.

Chairman DiPentima stated that Ms. Amico made an important point. There will be a meeting in spring to talk about the results.

Councilor Shaheen inquired as to whether a date could be set for a similar meeting when the results are in and the same information could be provided that was provided to participants who had previously received blood test results.

Mayor Lister suggested formulating the recommendations at this time.

Councilor Shaheen has heard three *recommendations* so far in the discussion this evening:

1. Formation of a Community Advisory Panel to support the work of ATSDR and they shall coordinate with DHHS and the affected/exposed community
2. Formation of an advisory group shall be a priority for the new council
3. A date for another community presentation based on latest round of blood tests is to be set

Chairman DiPentima said it would most likely be up to DHHS to set the date for items 3. Councilor Shaheen stated that the new body could work with DHHS to set the date.

Ms. McNamara presented a fourth *recommendation*:

4. Provide information on how people can protect themselves and their children from ongoing chemical exposures

Ms. Amico stated that she is still hearing from a lot of people at Pease Tradeport that they were not aware of this process. There must be a way to engage the businesses at Pease Tradeport to contact employees possibly affected by the contamination.

A fifth *recommendation* was formulated out of this need:

5. The new committee/Panel is to engage with PDA in order to keep people informed

Councilor Shaheen wondered about contacting people that have a historic connection at Pease Tradeport.

Chairman DiPentima stated that this will be incorporated in the work that ATSDR will do.

Ms. McNamara stated that there are a lot of things that ATSDR will be involved in and they are very interested in tracking people that have been exposed over a period of time.

Ms. Amico presented another *recommendation*:

6. The AF follows through with treating all 3 wells

Mr. Goetz stated that DPW has a contract in place with an engineering firm that is already in the process of designing a treatment system for the wells. There is a meeting tomorrow with the Technical Team including EPA, DES, and AF regarding aquifer clean up, modeling and the latest data analysis, assessing risk, plumes, and travel time. Next week, there is another meeting with the Technical Team. Two treatment systems are being designed. The drinking water system and the aquifer clean-up system and things are progressing. The order by the EPA pushed this piece forward. Progress really gained momentum from this committee and by this time next year, hopefully things will be up and running with the new treatment systems.

Chairman DiPentima stated that the RAB will be monitoring to ensure AF is following through.

Mr. Goetz stated that he will be a member of RAB.

Ms. McNamara stated that she would like to hold the AF as close to a “non-detect” level as possible, not just a PHA. Breakthrough can and does happen, and that should not be acceptable simply because the breakthrough level is below the PHA.

Mr. Goetz stated that “non-detect” is stated in the agreement. Testing and detection now is even better than it has been historically.

Councilor Shaheen suggested that perhaps the recommendation could be to continue to track the ongoing work of the RAB and ensure the terms of the agreement as stipulated are fulfilled.

Chairman DiPentima formulated the next *recommendation*:

7. The new committee/panel will coordinate efforts with RAB and a member of the CAB will be a member of the RAB

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz stated that firefighters are a bit of a different group. He inquired as to whether the CAB might entertain something firefighter specific. Firefighters have been working at Pease for 20 years and for many hours. Even though it was not his intent to single out firefighters, some measure of a supportive nature would be helpful.

Ms. Amico asked for clarification around “supportive nature.”

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz asked if a recommendation could be specific to firefighters.

Councilor Shaheen agreed that firefighters have had an element of overexposure working at Pease for over 20 years.

Mayor Lister stated that they are an easier group to identify currently and historically.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz stated that all firefighters have been contacted.

Ms. McNamara stated that there is an overall concern about cancer rates in firefighters in general. It is her hope that ATSDR can use this group to further their understanding of this level of exposure. She doesn't know how to recognize this in the form of a recommendation because it is such a specialized group.

Chairman DiPentima stated that this is part of the work for ATSDR, but it would be helpful for the City Council to understand that there is a group of City employees that were greatly affected by the contamination and that were “overexposed.”

Mayor Lister stated that identifying all AF and National Guard personnel that have worked at Pease would be a more difficult task.

Chairman DiPentima formulated another *recommendation* based on the concerns around firefighters.

8. Recognition by the new CAP that there is a contingent of long-term employees from the Fire Department that were exposed to PFC's over the course of many years and many hours of work at Pease Tradeport

Ms. Amico wondered whether the City could take ownership in ensuring that ATSDR is communicating with the community. Communication moving forward is a key. She wondered whether this can be made into a recommendation.

Ms. McNamara stated that speaking for the City Health Department, there are not the resources to take that on.

Chairman DiPentima stated that he sees this as part and parcel of the ongoing work that needs to be done to monitor the health effects. Individuals would be notified.

Ms. Amico shared the concern that ATSDR made it clear that they would not be up and running for a minimum of 1 to 2 years. She inquired about what then would happen to people that are leaving Pease Tradeport or the community now. Long-term communication with people at Pease must be a priority. She is not suggesting that the City Health Department take that on, but perhaps it can be made a recommendation that ATSDR take that on and that it start as soon as possible.

Ms. McNamara stated that ATSDR looks at the longer term and bigger picture that this group may not have access to. CAB is looking at one issue right now; some broader health concept may come along down the road that ATSDR has access to (data and a larger population) and it will help in furthering the understanding and knowledge about this community and this issue.

Councilor Shaheen stated that a key is allowing CAP to do its work, such as identifying a registry, with ATSDR.

Ms. Amico inquired as to whether the CAB website can remain in place. If this group dissolves, it may be important for this to remain in place with a point of contact (if it is not already in place).

Ms. McNamara stated that she believed that it will remain in place and will check on this.

Mayor Lister suggested solidifying this as a *recommendation*:

9. The website shall be maintained or at least available in the present form, and information and data is available and will be archived.

Chairman DiPentima stated that he will put the information discussed in report form and will share it. He asked for comments and additions from CAB in order to get it to the Council on December 21, 2015. He asked Ms. McNamara for administrative support.

Ms. Amico inquired if anyone had been in contact with ATSDR.

Chairman DiPentima stated that they had been alerted about the meeting this evening.

Councilor Shaheen inquired about what form the presentation will take on December 21, 2015.

Chairman DiPentima stated that it will be in the form of a written report and a summary would be given.

Ms. Amico inquired about the expectation of CAB at the City Council meeting.

Chairman DiPentima stated that he will present the report. If there are questions from the Council, the CAB can answer them.

Mayor Lister recommended that all CAB members be present at the City Council meeting. He stated that the presentation will be to the current City Council, but the new City Council and Mayor will get the report and they will be invited to all interim meetings.

Chairman DiPentima presented another *recommendation*:

10. The new Mayor will consider asking members of CAB to participate on the new committee

Councilor Shaheen thanked everyone for their participation and efforts.

Chairman DiPentima once again thanked everyone for their valued input and hard work.

Audience participant (Elaine) thanked everyone for volunteering their time past, present, and future.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni McLellan
Recording Clerk, City of Portsmouth