



## **TOWN OF TISBURY**

*Office of*

### **THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

PO Box 666, 66 High Point Lane

Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts 02568

Telephone (508) 696-4290

Fax (508) 696-7341

#### **Meeting Minutes – August 27, 2018 – 8:30 AM**

The Tisbury Board of Health (BOH) met on Monday, August 27, 2018, at the Tisbury Town Hall Annex.

Commissioners in attendance were Chairman Michael Loberg and Jeff Pratt. Maura Valley, Health Agent, and Catie Blake, Assistant Health Agent, were also in attendance. Commissioner Boyd and Valerie Soushek, Administrative Secretary, were absent.

Chairman Loberg presided and called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

#### **APPOINTMENT(S)**

**8:30 AM**      **Dr. Ruth Faden, Johns Hopkins Bioethicist re: “Mice Against Ticks”**

“Mice Against Ticks” is an open, community-guided project, which aims to safeguard islands like Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket by stably reducing the incidence of tick-borne disease. The communities of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket are directing this MIT based project to immunize the local mouse population in order to permanently break the transmission cycle between white-footed mice and ticks. This long-lasting, ecological solution should reduce the number of infected ticks, prevent new human infections and profoundly impact this growing public health challenge.

Dr. Ruth Faden was asked by the Tisbury Board to represent the BOH on the steering committee. The steering committee is comprised of one representative from each town. They have met once and it was mostly a presentation by Dr. Kevin Esvelt and his colleagues from MIT.

Dr. Faden, who lives in Chilmark, has met with Dr. Esvelt and his colleagues on 2 occasions. The Chilmark representative on the committee is Matt Poole. Dr. Faden is somewhat confused on role of the committee and how to explore the paths of both science and the governance, simultaneously.

## Town of Tisbury - Board of Health Meeting Minutes – August 27, 2018, cont.

### Progress with Science

The prototype mouse is still being created. The mouse must have the proper immunity to Lyme disease and the mouse must be able to pass the characteristic on to at least 2 mouse generations. The basic science is in place, the concept is clear, but it is taking longer, possibly up to 2 years, to create sufficient mice to do an initial field trial. This would be the first release of the bio-engineered mouse.

Dr. Esvelt initially indicated that the field trials would be on an uninhabited island to minimize risks to human health, property values and ecology or the environment. Unfortunately they have not been able to find a suitable uninhabited island and they are now seeking a semi-inhabited island. They are pursuing opportunities with privately-owned islands off the coast of Massachusetts that either have no year-round or minimal year-round residents. They have identified a potential island and are in the process of developing a contract with the island owner.

The program is currently looking for relevant baseline data in the field for further research at MIT or Bar Harbor before they go back to ask for permission to release mice on the test island. Since the life cycle of the tick is 2 plus years and the life cycle of the mouse is 1 plus years the expected time for requiring a decision from Martha's Vineyard is probably five to six years.

### Governance Questions

Dr. Faden feels that her role and the role of the steering committee is unclear. She raised many questions that remain to be answered. Who will fund the project? Who will be the decision-maker? How should Martha's Vineyard make the decision? If the islands don't want to move forward with the project, who will make that call or manage it? Will the voters be involved? Will the committee make recommendations on how to manage? Should independent technical experts be involved? What are the potential conflicts of interests in terms of funding and representation? How is it maintained, i.e. how often will mutant mice releases need to occur?

Dr. Faden stated that there is currently a grant for research from Greenwall Foundation in place and maybe Department of Defense will assist with funding. Dr. Esvelt and his group are actively seeking funding and fundraising from private donors on both islands.

### Next Steps

Dr. Faden will keep the BOH advised on decisions made on governance topics and will attend a BOH meeting in Spring, 2019.

## HEALTH AGENT OPERATIONAL UPDATE

### Vacation

Ms. Valley reported that she will be on vacation September 14 – 21, 2018.

Town of Tisbury - Board of Health Meeting Minutes – August 27, 2018, cont.

NitROE Pilot Program

Ms. Valley reported that a participant has withdrawn from the Program and another property is being identified.

Finished basement / 210 Winyah Lane / 13-B-1.1

Ms. Valley reported that the property is limited to 3 bedrooms in the DCPC. They have a one room basement and would like to finish half of the basement as an exercise room, no bathrooms. The commissioners voted to approve the request, unanimously.

Tisbury School

At the Town Administrator's request, Ms. Valley reported that there are on-going concerns with mold in two (2) classrooms at the Tisbury School. There are no published Federal standards for safe or unsafe levels of mold; however, Ms. Valley conducted some research and found an analysis from Air Analysis Inc. and Environmental Analysis Associates that shows the mold levels at the School well within normal levels.

The commissioners voted, even though the levels of mold are within normal levels, to have the rooms HEPA vacuumed according to Dr. Bill Vaughn's, Nauset Environmental Services, suggestion. Otherwise, the rooms are considered safe according to Ms. Valley's research.

PAYABLES AND PERMITS FOR APPROVAL

Staples / Office Supplies / \$108.49

With no further business to conduct the Board of Health Commissioners, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Soushek  
Administrative Secretary

Document(s)

The Board of Health accepts the meeting minutes, dated August 27, 2018, as presented.

Date: 10/9/18

Signed: 