

**Board of Health Meeting**  
**May 15, 2003**

Present: David Osler, M.D., Chairman  
Arnold Duclersaint, Member  
Jack Vondras, Director  
Guy Selfridge, Jr., Chief Code Enforcement Officer  
Vithal Deshpande, Environmental Coordinator for the City of Somerville  
Estella Papassavas  
Robert Treat, Counsel for Tufts University  
Nicholas Magliano, Tufts University  
Cesar Pungirum, Tobacco Control Program

The meeting was called to order 4:05 PM.

Dr. Osler made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2003 meeting. Mr. Duclersaint seconded the motion. Two to zero, vote unanimous.

***Tufts University Asbestos Hearing:***

Mr. Selfridge was asked to give a brief summary on his inspection of Metcalf Hall, at Tufts University, room 206. At the initial inspection of January 6, 2003 the floor of room 206 was dirty but the tiles were intact. He explained that over time Ms. Papassavas's son cracked several tiles, possibly with his computer chair. The University had the cracked tiles tested for asbestos and contracted to have a new floor laid over the existing one. If the tiles were not friable then there was no issue. Upon a reinspection, several tiles in the hallway were cracked and once again the University had them repaired.

Ms. Estella Papassavas voiced her concerns and presented several exhibits to the Board. Exhibit #1 was from the Department of Environmental Protection, a report submitted by Mr. Jim Jordan explaining he inspected room 206 west and found delaminated floor tile. He informed Mr. Magliano who was in the room with him that they should address the tiles before they break. Exhibit #2 is the complaint form written up in the Somerville Health Department's Office with the initial call from Ms. Papassavas complaining of possible asbestos in her son's dorm room at Tufts University. Exhibit #3 is a letter from Jack Vondras to Ms. Estella Papassavas denying her hearing explaining the request was premature because a final report from Covino Environmental Associates, Inc. concerning the potential health risks from the broken tile was not received. Exhibits #4, #5 and #6 pertain to filing a written petition to a right to hearing and a response to hold such a hearing. Exhibit #7 is a letter written from Howard S. Wensley, Director of the Division of Community Sanitation at the Department of Public Health asking the Somerville Board of Health to confirm the condition of the asbestos containing flooring within this building and if friable asbestos is noted, to order the owner to immediately abate the condition. Exhibit #8 is a letter addressed to Mr. Selfridge from Nicholas Magliano, Manager at Tufts University explaining the procedures Tufts University has taken to comply with removing the damaged tiles. Exhibit #9 is a letter to Nicholas Magliano from Mr. Selfridge ordering him to remove all loose or cracked tiles from the staircases of the building. Exhibits #10 and #11 are photos of Metcalf West hallways and Metcalf West Room 206. Exhibits # 12 and #13 are publications regarding indoor air pollution

stating, “when asbestos-containing material is damaged or disintegrated with age, microscopic fibers may be dispersed into the air”; and “Asbestos is not dangerous when contained inside tiles or pipe insulation, but once exposed, fine asbestos fibers can be inhaled and cause various health problems.

In closing, Ms. Papassavas felt that Mr. Selfridge did not thoroughly inspect Metcalf Hall and violations were not cited by the Health Department.

Mr. Robert Treat asked to view exhibits #10 and #11, the photos. He explained that the University attended this hearing with respect to room 206. He presented a report from Sheldon H. Rabinovitz, Certified Industrial Hygienist and Toxicologist at Sandler Occupational Medicine Associates, Inc. In brief, he explained the air quality taken in the dorm room was average. No health threat was present. (Exhibits 1 thru 11, along with Mr. Rabinovitz’s report are attached).

Dr. Osler thanked Ms. Papassavas and assured her the Board would review the exhibits regarding the hearing on Metcalf Hall. Dr. Osler suggested that Mr. Vondras check with the City Solicitor’s office regarding the Board of Health’s responsibilities and that this be placed on the next meeting agenda in June.

***New Board Member:***

Ms. Cecelia Sosa-Patterson went before the Board of Alderman and was approved as the new Board of Health member. She will be attending the Board of Health hearing, May 22, 2003.

***Public Meetings for Board of Health:***

Mr. Vondras then explained that public meetings could no longer be held at the City Hall Annex because the elevator is not ADA compliant. Several other sites will be considered for Board meetings, such as the High School conference room or the meeting room at the TAB Building.

***Well Being Report:***

Noreen Burke and Mr. Vondras attended a Community Health Breakfast sponsored by the Institute of Community Health regarding the well being of Somerville. A majority of the data from the behavioral risk factor survey was observed at other meetings; the discussion was upbeat and an estimated 75 people were in attendance.

***Tobacco Control Program:***

The site visit performed by the Department of Public Health was very positive. The Somerville Tobacco Control Program is in full compliance with their reporting.

***Clean Air Works:***

Mr. Vondras explained that Cesar Pungirum, Director of the Tobacco Control Program will open up the hearing on Clean Air Works next week. Several other keynote speakers will follow and then the floor will be open to the public. Each speaker having no more than two minutes. No vote will be made at the public hearing. It was recommended by Cheryl Sbarra that the language being introduced into the Tobacco Regulations be changed after the hearing. The Cambridge Working meeting was held May 14, 2003 with the hearing scheduled for June 2, 2003. Mr. Vondras stated that the Massachusetts

Restaurant Association would like to see the smoking ban go State wide and then national.

Dr. Osler suggested the testimonies that are to be presented at the hearing go into public record.

***Staff Changes:***

Elizabeth Roche, the Administrative Assistant in the Health Department Office resigned as of May 9, 2003. The position is already posted; the deadline to apply is June 13, 2003.

***Budget:***

The Somerville Health Department was awarded the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services of the Department of Public Health, guaranteed for five years and is a half a million dollars.

There was a preliminary review of the budget with the Mayor; no action was taken.

Dr. Osler asked if there was any word on the Teen Connection. Mr. Vondras stated the anticipated date is the new school year. They are working on getting equipment and finishing work on phone lines and computer hook-ups.

At this point Mr. Pungirum came into the meeting and gave a short overview of the public hearing. He will do a short presentation regarding the changes in the regulations. Alyson Doyle will also speak regarding Clean Air Works and a presentation from the Cambridge Health Alliance regarding statistics; health concerns, etc. will be made. They will then open the floor for comments at two-minute intervals. Then there will be closing remarks. Mr. Pungirum stated they are still receiving letters of support from the public. He also stated that he received a call from Stephen Mackey requesting a copy of the proposed regulations and the flyers that were sent out to bars. He will get them in the mail to Mr. Mackey.

***Next Meeting:***

The next Board of Health meeting will be held June 12, 2003 at 4:30 PM at the Somerville High School Conference room located at 81 Highland Avenue, Somerville, on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. At the main office, take a left turn. The conference room is on the right hand side.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Pickett  
Administrative Assistant