

# BOARD OF HEALTH Emergency Meeting

Town of Nantucket

131 Pleasant Street

Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554

[www.nantucket-ma.gov](http://www.nantucket-ma.gov)

**Commissioners:** Stephen Visco (chair), Malcolm MacNab, MD, PHD (Vice chair), James Cooper, Meredith Lepore, Melissa Murphy Select Board

**Staff:** Roberto Santamaria, Artell Crowley, Kathy LaFavre, Anne Barrett, John Hedden

~~ MINUTES ~~

**Thursday, August 12, 2021**

*This meeting was held via remote participation using ZOOM and YouTube,  
Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Regarding Open Meeting Law*

Called to order and announcements at 10:31 a.m. by Mr. Visco

**Staff:** Roberto Santamaria, Health Director; Jerico Mele, Human Services Director; Heather Francis, Community Health Clinical Administrator; Kathy LaFavre, Health Inspector; John Hedden, Health Inspector; Terry Norton, Town Minutes Taker

**Attending Members:** Stephen Visco, Chair; Malcolm MacNab, Vice chair; James Cooper; Meredith Lepore; Melissa Murphy

**Late:** Murphy, 10:51 a.m.

**Documents used:** Report – SARS-CoV-2 virus in wastewater; Emergency Order 16

## I. EMERGENCY ORDERS DISCUSSION

### a. Order 17 – Occupancy Restrictions

**Discussion** **Santamaria** – Over this last week we had a small drop in viral concentration which brings the predicted cases per day down to 10; the drop can be due to the reduced number of people on the Island. Doesn't think occupancy is the way to go. A lot of businesses have voluntarily asked for proof of vaccination.

**MacNab** – He doesn't have a problem in an environment where everyone wears masks; but there is a hole he doesn't know how to fill. The 2 most important things are to wear masks and get vaccinated. Asked if Mr. Santamaria could provide a source for all the infections where we should be focused.

**Santamaria** – It's large gathering points such as restaurants, bars, and parties. Three restaurants had staff infected from doing catering events.

**MacNab** – The hole he sees is that 75% occupancy limit doesn't work if they are all at the bar not wearing masks; asked what we can do about it. The issue isn't sitting in a theater or going to a store where people wear their masks.

**Santamaria** – If we go with a specific regulation, he would want Town Counsel to draft that; there are issues in treating one business different from another. We can adopt Phase III from the State to disallow bar service; you could sit at a bar but not stand.

**Visco** – The mask order we just put in is very clear. The alternative is to put in restrictions that were the way they were before but that would be nightmare.

**MacNab** – Suggested looking at another week of the septic numbers. He's not sure if the downward tic is good news or a break.

**Santamaria** – He likes waiting 2 weeks; that's how long it will take for the mask-wearing to take effect.

**Visco** – The college students are starting to leave; the Island population will start dropping.

**MacNab** – He believes 10 or 5 cases a week is what we'll have forever.

**Santamaria** – Keeping it under 10 is an acceptable number of cases; however, we need to watch what's happening in the rest of the State. We know vaccinated people coming down with Delta are

showing symptoms and unvaccinated are showing severe symptoms. We've had an exponential increase in vaccinations with the spike in cases.

**Cooper** – Asked if restaurants have come up with their own ideas.

**Santamaria** – The reaction to Order 16 is a mixed bag – more positive than negative. Some businesses want more teeth for enforcement. We occasionally have business owners, who say it isn't up to them. We've given out 3000 antigen tests; most were restaurant managers who responded positively about the mask order.

**Mele** – The soonest we can get more tests from the State is Monday. There were 3 medevacs and 1 hospitalization this past week.

**Lepore** – People are getting this from gatherings outside of businesses. Asked how to stop that. She has also heard that restaurants are using the antigen test for their employees, but she has concerns about it versus the PCR. Asked if there is a way to give restaurants guidance as to what to do should an employee test positive.

**Mele** – We are advising restaurants on how to close in the event of an infection.

**Santamaria** – we are looking into funding for our own PCR test machine; that would allow us to handle some of the tests.

**Lepore** – Asked about pool testing once a week for Town businesses.

**Santamaria** – That is a good way to go.

**MacNab** – He likes Island the immunization rate; however, it's hard to know since we don't know how many people are on Island.

**Santamaria** – That is a very large project; you'd have to study cell phone usage on a specific day at a specific time. Over 50% of the Island's year-round population has been vaccinated; he'd like to see that at 55%. We are starting to get a critical mass of those 15 years old and older. Once vaccination under 15 hits, we'll see another bump in the vaccinations, which should get us to 60%.

**Cooper** – Asked if we could push a program that you can't enter a business unless you have your vaccination card.

**Santamaria** – The Chicken Box and Cisco are voluntarily requiring that, but he discourages the BOH getting involved in making that a requirement across the board.

**Murphy** – Asked if there is a recap of recommendations she might have missed.

**Santamaria** – We should wait another week or two regarding occupancy. We need to tweak language on last week's mask order; cited the changes he wants to make: who is fined in the event of a violation, define open space regarding tents, and gyms want masks off on cardio machines.

**Murphy** – Asked how compliance is going for businesses requiring masks. Also, asked the objective of the policies and best how to protect people. There is a lot of personal responsibility to protect yourself and others.

**Santamaria** – If you come into contact with people who have co-morbidities or unvaccinated people, you shouldn't congregate in large groups and should wear masks. There is a lot of misinformation that children aren't affected by COVID; that is not true. Delta is contagion rate is R7 and Chicken Pox is R8.

**Murphy** – Asked if we could have infection information broken down by age. It would be helpful to understand which population is most affected.

**Mele** – The more granular the information we share, the closer we get to identifiable information, especially with age categories. He can look at adding more data to the longer-term report. He can provide insights from other states; we are seeing an increase in Delta among the unvaccinated.

**Santamaria** – Under Item 11 regarding enforcement, he would add "and/or business entity" and under Item 4 add the gym request not to wear masks while using cardio machines.

**Murphy** – Air circulation is a best friend; she's not sure having the bikes even 10' apart is enough to protect others from exposure.

**Lepore** – If everyone is vaccinated, she'd feel better; working out could create a higher level of transmission.

**Cooper** – Agrees with Ms. Lepore.

**MacNab** – If we grant the gyms and exception; other businesses will request exemptions. He doesn't want to get to the point where we are adding exceptions every week to Order 16.

**Visco** – Suggested leaving out the exemption for gyms.

**Murphy** – Last week we talked about being nuanced; however, right now it might be best to leave the order as is.

**Santamaria** – If we keep adding exceptions, we'll have an order no one understands. The way outbreaks are going across the Country and State, he thinks Governor Baker will issue guidelines soon. Another amendment would be a new Item 5 providing the definition of "indoors" regarding tents and renumber as necessary.

**Murphy** – That will be important for event planners and use of rented property.

**Motion to Approve the amendments to Order 16 as noted.** (made by: MacNab) (seconded)

Carried unanimously//Lepore, Murphy, Cooper, MacNab, and Visco-aye

**Santamaria** – BOH is scheduled for a regular meeting on August 19<sup>th</sup>; we can readdress occupancy at that time.

**Lepore** – Asked if signs about mask mandates will be put up.

**Santamaria** – Yes; also, Town meetings are moving to ZOOM again.

**Murphy** – We can get help from the Chamber of Commerce as well to spread word on the mask mandate. Glad about going back to ZOOM; being indoors with masks and using mics makes it difficult to be understood.

**Visco** – We don't need Friday's meeting.

**Nickole Tara** – An announcement my company and our competitor are going to make is a vaccination requirement for all our publicly ticketed events starting September 1. Encouraged the board to take our direction and adopt a similar mandate for bars and restaurants and eliminate the mask order.

Action  
Roll-call Vote

Adjournment.  
Motion  
Roll-call Vote

**Motion to Adjourn 11:35 a.m.** (made by: Murphy) (seconded)

Carried unanimously// Lepore, Murphy, Cooper, MacNab, and Visco-aye

Submitted by:  
Terry L. Norton