

Minutes
Health Advisory Council
June 11, 2013

Present: Marva Serotkin, Indira Desai, Kiran Milunsky, Aric Parnes, Betty Cohen, Julia Feldman, Brenda Mulligan

Absent: Peter Buechler

Guests:

Teresa Wood Kett, Program Specialist, Newton Health Department

Wesley Chin, Tobacco Control Coordinator, Newton Health Department

DJ Wilson, Tobacco Control Director, Mass Municipal Association

The focus of this meeting was to review and vote on a set of possible changes to Newton's ordinances regarding the sale of tobacco and nicotine products.

Dori informed the council that the most recent Massachusetts Health Risk Behavior Survey shows a 1% decline in the number of middle and high school students in Newton who report smoking tobacco, from 7% two years ago to 6% currently. Her goal in pursuing revisions to Newton's tobacco ordinances is to prevent young people from starting to use tobacco and nicotine products.

Among the possible ordinance changes that were discussed, the council agreed to recommend the following:

1. Expand current regulations to include nicotine delivery products
2. Tobacco vendors should display a sign regarding smoking cessation information.
3. Vendors should include wording that explains restrictions on use of nicotine delivery products in public places.
4. Do not make restrictions on the number of permits to sell tobacco and nicotine products.
5. Investigate the possibility of banning the sale of flavored tobacco products, as an alternative to the proposal of having minimum cigar packing and price requirements.
6. Ban the sale of blunt wraps
7. Not necessary to ban the redemption of coupons for tobacco products
8. Not necessary to ban sale of tobacco and nicotine products in educational institutions.

There was considerable discussion regarding the idea of raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco and nicotine products to either 19 or 21, as has been done in neighboring towns of Brookline, Watertown, Belmont, Needham and Arlington. Additional information was requested regarding the experiences of towns who have implemented this and views of local teens.

Dori will arrange a special council meeting on this issue. Representatives from a local teen advisory group will be invited, as well as a local pediatrician who is an authority on this subject. Dori will also seek information from her counterpart in Needham regarding the implementation and effectiveness of their program.

Special meeting date to be announced

Next regular meeting: Tuesday, October 8th