

**Skokie Board of Health
February 14, 2019**

Present

Dr. Gaynes
Ms. Jones
Dr. Shim
Dr. Sood
Dr. Topouzian

Ms. Urbanus
Dr. Vernon
Dr. Werner
Dr. Williams

Absent

Trustee Bromberg
Dr. Usman

Excused

Mr. Abbasi
Dr. Dave
Dr. Drachler
Ms. Nickisch
Duggan
Ms. Haido

Ms. Moy Wooten
Mr. Pandya
Dr. Prince
Ms. Varma

Dr. Catherine Counard, Director of Health
Mr. David Clough, Staff

Janelle Silva, Skokie Farmer's Market Manager

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Dr. Werner, Acting Chairman. Dr. Werner declared that due to lack of quorum the meeting would be an informational session with no official actions taken.

Approval of Minutes - The minutes will be approved at the March meeting when there are enough Board members present to meet quorum.

Janelle Silva, Skokie Farmers' Market Manager – See attached report

Janelle Silva began the presentation by showing a YouTube video highlighting the work of the Skokie Farmers' Market. Here is a link to the video: [Skokie Farmers' Market Video](#)

Ms. Silva reported that this past season was the first year that the market was able to accept USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Through a generous grant from NorthShore University HealthSystem, the Farmers' Market was able to provide up to \$10 in matching dollars per day per customer with SNAP benefits. This effectively doubled the amount of money SNAP recipients could spend at the market. News of the SNAP benefits program spread quickly through word of mouth. We worked to ensure that the SNAP recipients felt welcomed and valued. On average 26 SNAP recipients came each week to the market, and the entire match fund grant was used.

The majority of Skokie SNAP recipients were Russian language speakers. To facilitate communication with this community, explanations of the benefit program were translated into Russian.

The market runs for twenty two weeks, and hosts forty vendors. The market donated fresh produce to the Niles Township Food Pantry, in partnership with the Commission on Family Services Produce Initiative. This ensures that those in need can receive healthy food.

The market has taken on a number of green initiatives including a "Waste Wise" station to encourage recycling. The Waste Wise station had a large pictorial display showing what items could go in which containers so recycling was easy regardless of English ability. Additionally, a "Bring Your Own Bag" initiative was created to offer rewards for bringing a reusable bag to the market.

Lakeshore Recycling has been a strong partner in the markets green initiatives. They have contracted to offer weekly compost pick up at the market giving Skokie residents a convenient way to dispose of their organic materials. They also offer pumpkin composting after Halloween each year.

Ms. Silva mentioned some of the additional programming available at the market. When she first began managing the market, she noticed that there weren't many children in attendance. To encourage more children to come she reached out to other Village Departments like Fire and Health to bring activities to the market each week. Programs such as the "touch a truck", "meet an animal control officer", "Rethink Your Drink", and car seat checks all attracted more families. North Branch Yoga offers free morning yoga once a month as well.

The Skokie Farmers Market will run again this year from June through early November.

With that, Ms. Silva concluded her presentation.

Dr. Werner asked if the SNAP grant would be renewed next year. Ms. Silva reported that NorthShore was very impressed with how well the initiative was carried out, so she imagined it would be.

Ms. Topouzian asked about smoking at the market. Ms. Silva reported that the Skokie Farmers' Market is a smoke free event hosted by the Village. No smoking or vaping is allowed at the market past the entrance barricades.

Dr. Williams recommended sand gardens as a great way to teach kids where food really comes from. Ms. Silva agreed adding that she was hoping to start red worm composting at the market as well.

Ms. Jones said that the children's initiatives had been very successful. She was wondering if there was any possibility of similar programming being made available year round.

Ms. Silva responded that the consumer affairs commission has been discussing exploring a winter market. Additionally, the Village is working with the Skokie Park District and Emily Oaks to provide additional nature programming at the market.

Dr. Williams mentioned that the boy and girl scouts are often looking for service projects and could help with some of the market initiatives.

Dr. Gaynes stated that at the Evanston Farmers' Market there are often people with petitions and such. He hasn't noticed a similar presence at the Skokie Farmers' Market and wondered if there was some control over that. Ms. Silva replied that Skokie has specific rules that no non-profits, businesses, or other non-official vendors are allowed in the market.

Ms. Silva also wanted to stress that there are no dogs allowed at the Skokie Farmers' Market. Ms. Silva reported that people frequently bring dogs despite signage and other promotional materials clearly stating that it is against the rules. She explained that this was to remain in compliance with health department

sanitation codes. Dogs aren't allowed for the same reason they aren't allowed in a grocery store or a commercial kitchen.

Dr. Shim asked if the farmers are donating their food at the end of the market. Ms. Silva said that was the case. The farmers donated more than 6,000 pounds of produce to the Food Pantry last season. Dr. Shim followed up by asking if Skokie had any community gardens. Ms. Silva replied that the Skokie Park District, the Talking Farm, and Niles Township all have plots for rent.

Chair's Report

Dr. Werner spoke about the Skokie Resilient Communities Collaborative (SRCC) meeting on January 29. Dr. Werner said that he was impressed with the variety of fields represented in the group and found it to be an excellent discussion.

Dr. Werner also shared an article from the CDC reporting that teen tobacco use has increased for the first time in a long time. The article cited vaping and JUUL in particular as being responsible for the increase. An Illinois Tobacco 21 bill was introduced and passed the general assembly last year but was vetoed by Governor Rauner. Dr. Werner encouraged everyone to support the new Tobacco 21 bill being introduced.

Dr. Topouzian mentioned a previous discussion of books related to Adverse Childhood Experiences. The Board discussed books on the topic they had read recently, including Hillbilly Elegy, All Over but the Shoutin', The Body Keeps the Score, and Educated.

Director's Monthly Report – a copy is attached

Highlights included:

- **Focus on Food Safety Program**
During 2018, the sanitarians conducted 1,551 establishment inspections to ensure that food is prepared, served and stored in a manner that will prevent people from becoming ill. The inspectors also monitor food safety practices during large events such as the Farmers' Market, Festival of Cultures, Backlot Bash and Fourth of July Celebration.
- **Tobacco 21 is taken up by Illinois Senate**
The Senate Public Health Committee voted 008-004-000 in favor of SB21, which will raise the age to purchase tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and alternative nicotine products to 21 in Illinois. Sen. Laura Fine is a Co-Sponsor of the bill, which is now under consideration by the full Senate.
- **Community Development Block Grant for Adult Dental Care Screening**
Access to dental care is exceedingly difficult to obtain for low income adults who do not have dental insurance. The Asian Human Services Family Health Center Skokie clinic willingly provides this service to anyone in need regardless of ability to pay, and was awarded \$7,000 to defray the cost for Skokie residents.

- **Influenza Deaths Highlight the Importance of Vaccination**

Five middle aged Skokie residents became ill enough with influenza to be admitted to the hospital intensive care unit (ICU). Two of these individuals died. None had been vaccinated.

Dr. Williams reported that the Asian Human Services Family Health Center will be opening a new facility at the corner of Milwaukee and Golf in Niles.

Dr. Werner asked if the adults who died from influenza had underlying health conditions. Dr. Counard said that she would need to verify that information, but she believed a number of them did have other health issues.

Old Business

No old business

New Business

Pat Urbanus discussed the Next Door app, which allows people in a neighborhood to communicate and share information. She was surprised at how few people seemed aware of the services offered by the Village. Dr. Williams suggested sharing the main Village number on Next Door for people to call.

Dr. Counard added that Board of Health members are ambassadors for the Village, and can certainly refer people to the Village for help with issues.

Dr. Counard shared an invitation from the Muslim Educational Center in Morton Grove, and asked if the Board of Health would consider attending their May 9th Community Iftar dinner. This is the date of a regularly scheduled Board meeting, and would be treated the same as when we visited the Holocaust Museum. Board members would need to arrive by 6:30 PM.

Ms. Jones asked when the Annual Boards and Commissions dinner would occur this year. Dr. Sood mentioned that it was scheduled for Monday, April 8th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Next meeting:

Thursday, March 14 at 7:00 PM

Village Hall

5127 Oakton Street
