

Newton Biosafety Committee
Minutes March 12, 2015

Committee Members Present:

Carl M. Cohen, Bill Dietrich, Gary du Moulin, Thekla S. Diehl, Ted Marple, Aric Parnes, Jay Schwartz

City Staff Present:

Linda Walsh, Marie Lawlor, Daniel Sexton

Not Present:

Brenda Mulligan

Meeting started at 7:00 pm

Welcome and introductions

Minutes from January 7, 2015 unanimously approved with some grammatical corrections

PowerPoint presentation by Dan Sexton, from the City of Newton Planning Dept. regarding Special Permit Request

- Currently a vacant building
- Only exterior work being done currently
- Looking for a new Special Permit to allow for mix of retail, office, laboratory, medical office, restaurant
- Laboratory use for up to 100,000 sq. ft.

Discussion of how to handle the questions of BL1 and BL2 lab use without knowing the tenant opened up conversation. Carl spoke to text book definition of biosafety level designations.

Linda explained the process of the questions being addressed by the committee in written response form, attendance by representatives of this committee at the Land Use Committee meeting (when the public hearing for this special Permit application is resumed) and possible presentation. She explained that the general discussion should take place in this open meeting format in an effort to reach consensus.

A motion was made to by Linda, seconded by Thekla to have Bill and Carl draft written responses to the questions. Unanimous vote in favor. The draft will be circulated by Linda and comments should only go to Linda.

Discussion on question 1

Carl explained Level 1 use is comparable to a biology lab in High School. Precautions are taken. Level 2 is like blood work being done in a doctor's office. There can be infectious agents such as the influenza virus requiring slightly higher levels of precautions

Gary spoke about his past work in an office on Wells Avenue and the lab precautions taken, storage, etc.

Jay commented on the open ended nature of questions. Wondered if answering them would create an inherent conflict once an rDNA permit is submitted by an actual tenant. Conclusion that answers to the questions will require appropriate contingencies.

Will need definitions of BL1, BL2; explain how rDNA fits in; abundantly safe and common

Discussion on question 2

This seems to be a text book question. The Newton Bio safety committee has a member sit on board of company's internal biosafety committee to review all research protocols. Linda, as interim commissioner is fulfilling this role. Oversight by state authority (Massachusetts Department of Public Health and compliance with federal guidelines provides the checks and balances.

All laboratories that come before the committee get a thorough review of policies and procedures.

A review of facility operations is conducted to review

- Appropriately designed, including holding areas, and proper procedures for handling waste.
- Training procedures of employees
- List of organisms
- List of waste disposal prgm

Karyopharm had an excellent application and used a consultant that provided a great presentation and will provide the continuing oversight that is crucial.

Also, rDNA permits require annual renewal and annual in service retraining

Agreed to refer to an additional organization that provide oversight

Discussion on question 3

If the process described in 1 & 2 is followed and assuming everything is in order, the answer would be "YES". Carl stated "residents can have 100% piece of mind".

Jay said this is "normal and customary given constraints and oversight."

A motion was made to have someone represent the committee to present responses to questions before land Use Committee. Motion by Ted. All were in favor.

Carl made a motion, seconded by Aric, to amend the vote on who would draft responses changed this to Bill and Jay. All in favor.

Other Business

- Discussion of creating a strong web site; Lexington mentioned for having something that is user friendly. Linda will look into hiring an intern to help with this
- Bios of committee members and staff
- What to do with the existing ordinance?
 - The current ordinance is very narrow and may not be sufficient for the City. Areas are omitted that should be considered for inclusion.

Motion to adjourn by Bill. Seconded by Thekla.

Meeting adjourned 8:50PM

Respectfully submitted by Linda Walsh

