

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2006

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting of the Medical Care Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on January 19, 2006, in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, all Commission Members were present with the exception of Commission Member Stein. Others present for all or a portion of the meeting were: Mayor McDonald, Town Council President Pro Tem Norman Goldblum, Town Councilman Richard Kleid, and Town Manager Peter Elwell.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Dennis.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as written.

IV. DISCUSSION OF THE CONTENT OF THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Chair Dennis commented that the purpose of the meeting today was very focused, and that was to look at the views of the Commission on what was needed in terms of the survey of the residents of Palm Beach.

Town Council President Pro Tem Goldblum addressed the Commission, stating that he had spoken to William Meyer, Trustee of the Quantum Foundation, concerning the shortage of

physicians, and how some small towns across the United States bring in physicians and support them and pay them a salary. Mr. Meyers had noted that it was not general practitioners that were the worry, but specialists, especially those having entry into the Emergency Rooms. He suggested that the Commission contact Quantum Foundation and work closely with them, for both financial and informational purposes.

Chair Dennis noted that Commission Member Stein had left a note relating to the survey being of physicians, and not patients. The survey of physicians could include any violation of patient care based on their experience with their patients, as well as physician experience with referrals and types of cases they treat, versus cases they refer to other specialities. It would also include physician experience at local hospitals. A patient survey may reflect things such as unclean floors, nurses not coming when called, etc., rather than an overall picture of the health care system.

Chair Dennis commented that the Commissions's mission was to represent the people, who were the consumers of health care on the Island, and the Commission was not created to represent physicians, or hospitals, or rehab centers, but the people of the Island, and their concerns and needs. He suggested that the focus remain today on the survey of the residents of Palm Beach.

Commission Member Traverse commented that it may be possible to do both; it may be necessary to evaluate what the physicians are doing. He suggested starting with the citizens, and then determining whether a physician survey would be done.

Mayor McDonald addressed the Commission, stating that he did not want to limit the Commission in any way, if it was believed that incorporating the physician data would be beneficial to them. Perhaps just hearing from residents would not point out some of the things that the Commission might want to pursue. He requested that if any issues came up where the Commission may think that it was deviating from its mission, that he would like the opportunity to address the issue with the Commission.

Dr. Traverse conveyed that the survey would produce useful information about the knowledge, attitude and experience of people living in the Town of Palm Beach with a statistical significant sample of the Town population, whether the survey should be by telephone or by mail. He noted that his experience in the medical industry found that more information was gathered by mail.

Chair Dennis noted that the experience with the Town phone survey several years ago had resulted in the disappointment of some people that were not called, and that the Commission had indicated previously that it would favor a mail survey to all citizens of Palm Beach.

Town Manager Elwell noted that the telephone survey, conducted in the manner that

professionals do them, may be a more purely statistically representative of a cross-section of the population; the Commission was more concerned with extracting the opinions of the people in the community who were most concerned about the medical issues.

Dr. Traverse specified some of the items that he would like to see included in the survey:

- ▶ How many months of the year does the family stay in Palm Beach.
- ▶ Ages of members of the household.
- ▶ Condition of the family's health.
- ▶ Medical specialty most important to them.
- ▶ Use of the hospital within the past 5 years, which one, and were they satisfied with the care, and do they have health insurance.
- ▶ Use of 9-1-1 and use of any emergency services in the past 5 years, where did they take you, how long did it take to get there.
- ▶ Do you and members of the household have a private physician for care and check-ups.
- ▶ Do you or your family qualify for medicare, medicaid or other insurance coverage.
- ▶ Have you visited an emergency room at the hospital in the past 2 years, which one, how long did you wait before being treated; what was your impression of the care; were you hospitalized afterwards.
- ▶ Have you had any elective admission to a hospital; which one; what was your impression of the care.
- ▶ Do you or your family have any special needs.
- ▶ What elements of medical care could you not find at the facilities in the Palm Beach area.
- ▶ Have you or any members of your household had training in routine cardio-pulmonary resuscitation; would you like to take such a training if it was available.
- ▶ Do you have an automatic cardiac defibrillator in your home; have you been trained on how to use it; would you like to have the training; has the staff of your building been trained in CPR and the use of an automatic cardio-pulmonary defibrillator. [In a heart attack with cardiac arrest, it has been shown that survival is doubled if cardio-pulmonary resuscitation is initiated while waiting for the emergency rescue personnel to arrive].
- ▶ Do you think that every high school in the state should teach CPR as a required course.
- ▶ Should CPR training be required in order to apply for a driver's license.
- ▶ It has been demonstrated that we have a shortage of physician specialists in cardiology, neurosurgery, orthopedics and ophthalmology willing to visit emergency rooms in hospitals, because their malpractice insurance rates will often double. If a hospital cannot get a specialist to come to the hospital for that reason, should we change the state law to allow hospital administrators to certify the unavailability of coverage, and allow them to come under a new "Good Samaritan Law" which, if the patient agrees, will not subject them to malpractice exposure for that visit to the emergency room.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2006

Chair Dennis suggested the addition of a question concerning whether the patient was required transfer for care to another facility, and if it was successful.

Commission Member Friedman commented that if the survey was all inclusive, people may not continue to answer the questions. He suggested that the Commission be realistic in the way that it proceeds in the review and refinement of the survey.

Chair Dennis suggested that the survey focus on obtaining the levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services that are available; this survey would contain basic questions. He suggested that another question to be added would be "Do you intend to leave the community for your health care?" which was a valid question because many people were looking outside of the community.

Town Manager Elwell suggested that there be a question asked that would determine whether or not the responder was a resident or household filling out the survey, or if it was a business. He noted that if the survey was sent to all addresses, that would also include the businesses in Town as well, and it had been his understanding that the Commission wanted to capture information from that segment of the community as well.

Commission Member Bilotti commented that the ideas must be submitted to a professional to lay it out, so that the survey would be worded appropriately.

Chair Dennis suggested a question in the survey related to the level of satisfaction with management of acute stroke and acute cardiac care.

Chair Dennis noted that he had contacted several consultants that might be useful; the County Health Department had indicated an interest in the survey, and he had pointed out that the survey that they had provided was really not directed to the questions of the Commission, however, they had indicated a willingness to help out with the survey.

Commission Member Bilotti suggested that there may be existing local physician surveys that could be reviewed.

Chair Dennis replied that Richard Cameron was working with the Palm Beach County Medical Society in that area, and that he would be invited to speak with the Medical Care Commission.

Commission Member Furlaud moved approval of scheduling meetings with several consultants to discuss alternatives for putting the survey together. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Friedman. The motion carried unanimously.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2006

Town Manager Elwell added that he would be meeting with an applicant for the staff assistant to the Medical Care Commission later today.

Chair Dennis expressed great thanks to Dr. Traverse for putting the suggested questions together, and for the input of all of the Commission members.

V. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

(Included in Item VI.)

VI. NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 24, 2006, AT 9 A.M.

Chair Dennis requested the inclusion at the January 24th meeting of Richard Cameron, perhaps a representative from Tenet Health Care, and several of the survey consultants, if they were available. A report would also be provided by the Fire-Rescue department related to emergency care.

Commission Member Furlaud suggested that the Commission, at some point, also request the attendance of several doctors who had made recommendations, in a study entitled "Executive Summary - Specialists On Call Covering the Palm Beach County Emergency Departments".

Chair Dennis noted that Richard Cameron represented the outgrowth of that study, and would be present on January 24th to address the Commission, and it could be determined at that time whether it would be appropriate for the other physicians to address the Commission.

Dr. Traverse noted that the American College of Emergency Physicians had issued a national report card, state by state, and that he would furnish a copy to the Commission members. Florida had received a C-, and one of the factors had been liability and the lack of doctors. He also referred to the recent newspaper article concerning doctors threatening to leave the Palms West Hospital emergency room.

Mayor McDonald commented that, after listening to Judy Goodman's report last week, he believed the most immediate focus of the Commission should be emergency care, as that pertained to every resident. He noted that his long term objective had been for the Commission to come up with the answer to the community having a world class facility that would treat the specific needs of residents. He suggested that having one meeting per month may not be enough during the season. He explained that part of the solution to the emergency care crises was actually political, however, the Commission would be in a position to actually pursue the issue politically at the

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2006

conclusion of its work.

Chair Dennis replied that the Commission planned on meeting as often as necessary.

Commission Member Bilotti commented that she had received correspondence from Dr. Ross, and that she would like to respond to him, and would like to receive input from the Commission members on how best to do that.

Chair Dennis replied that he would contact Dr. Ross.

Dr. Traverse commented that he had talked with a number of physicians who believed that the emergency care was an important issue for the Commission to approach; he suggested that the Commission consider formulating questions for a physician survey, so that it would be ready if it was going to be used.

Town Manager Elwell clarified that he and Chair Dennis would finalize the agenda for the meeting of January 24th; the back-up information would be provided in advance of the meeting to all Commission members.

Chair Dennis advised that he would contact Dr. Ross, would confirm things with Richard Cameron, would get the Tenet Health Care representative in place, and would see which survey consultants may be available.

Mayor McDonald suggested that the Commission plan its subsequent meeting that would take place after January 24th.

Commission Member Furlaud suggested that the Commission members choose one day per week that would be open for a meeting.

Town Manager Elwell suggested Tuesday mornings, with the exception of the second Tuesday of the month. He noted that the administrative assistant would soon be on board, and the accelerated meeting schedule may require a contract for someone to take the minutes of the meetings.

Town Council President Pro Tem Goldblum suggested that some meetings take place at the South Fire-Rescue station meeting room, since many residents in that area may wish to attend.

Chair Dennis remarked that he and Town Manager Elwell would review the suggestions made today, and return with more information on January 24th.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2006

Commission Member Friedman once again thanked Judy Goodman for her presentation at the January 12, 2006 Medical Care Commission.

In response to the question of Mayor McDonald related to funding of the survey, Chair Dennis advised that the Citizens Association, and the other associations on the Island had been urged to help support the survey. The Executive Committee of the Palm Beach Civic Association would be meeting today, and one of the topics would be support of the survey. He also noted that some individuals had indicated a willingness to help.

Commission Member Friedman mentioned that he been nominated for second Vice-Chair of the Citizens Association, and would be the liaison to the Medical Care Commission.

Discussion took place to piggy-backing on mailings done by the Citizens Association and Palm Beach Civic Association.

Town Manager Elwell urged that care be taken in doing the mailing of the survey, in order to ensure that every resident and business received the mailing.

Commission Member Bilotti discouraged piggy-backing, as she believed the survey should be an official survey coming from the Medical Care Commission.

Commission Member Friedman suggested that the Palm Beach County Commission may have funds available, and discussion could take place with them.

In response to the questions of accepting donations, Town Manager Elwell explained that donations to the Town were tax deductible in most cases, and donations could be earmarked for a particular purpose.

Chair Dennis suggested that before asking for funds from the public, he would like to have a budget figure in mind.

Town Manager Elwell explained that if the civic associations were willing to contribute to the costs of the survey, that would be a simpler than collecting many small individual donations.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2006

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting of the Medical Care Commission of January 18, 2006, was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Michael Dennis
Chair

Prepared by:
Susan A. Eichhorn
Town Clerk