

Minutes
Safe Food Advisory Committee
January 29th, 2009

Welcome and Introductions

Present: Doug Voegeli, Beth Cleary, Vickie Arneson, Susan Bulgrin, Gary Seiler, Clint Marshall, Joe Mazzara, Glen Timmcke, Carrie Bratt, Susan Quam, Bill Von Rutenberg, Wally Borowski, Tommye Schneider

Schneider announced the February move of the Environmental Health staff to International Lane.

Operator Issues and Updates

This will be a standing agenda item for operators to bring issues forward for discussion with industry partners.

An update was provided on the Salmonella outbreak caused by peanut butter, which expands every day. The department was asked to check the recall for effectiveness and found that it has not been effective. For example, one distributor decided that they did not have to recall their product. The appropriate staff was contacted at the State, who then contacted the FDA to follow up with this distributor.

Now that the merger is complete, the licensing system for establishments will change. The City of Madison is buying a new licensing system for all city departments and we will be using this new system in the future for all establishments in Dane County. At a future meeting, input will be requested to help with making the transition easier to apply for licenses and compile reports.

Staff has created new e-mail lists (listserv) for food establishments. In the future, this will be a way to get updates out quickly on information such as recalls and other news from the department. You must sign up for the listserv at <https://my.cityofmadison.com>. Please call us at 243-0330 if you have questions about this.

A question came up about temporary restaurant permits and staff clarified that the regulations for the city and county differ; in the county you get up to three events without needing a permit and in the city, you need a permit for each event.

One operator shared her concern about lack of hand washing in restaurants. This is especially topical with the recent outbreaks of Salmonella and Norovirus. It may be that inspectors can reinforce good hand washing practice with operators as part of the inspection. The flow of information about hand washing may not be getting from management to staff. This is a good topic for brainstorming. Statistics show that use of gloves is helpful.

One operator brought up a concern about the merger and another operator who had complained about the subsequent increased cost of licenses while getting the same or less service. Schneider explained that there is now a standardized inspection and reinspection process throughout the entire county. Part of the standardization included purchasing computers so inspections can be tracked. Voegeli explained further that an internal standardization is in process and next week a state evaluation will begin. As a result, better service to customers should be seen. There is concern among the operators that with the merger, things will change and they will not know what to expect as part of the inspection

process. A suggestion was made to perhaps send out a one-page sheet of what constitutes an inspection. During the transition, there seems to have been a shift in priority of citations. Part of the standardization process will result in a more consistent inspection process.

Unification

Standardization

State evaluation

Consistency

Moving the offices, all previously mentioned

Online Reporting of Inspection Results

For some time, this issue has been discussed and now it is more common for communities to have inspection reports posted to a website. The city is in the process of implementing a city wide licensing system that has the capability to record a wide variety of things from licenses to the location of fire trucks. The system implementation is scheduled for between January and July of 2010. This committee can make recommendations about what you would like to see, how things are tracked and presented to the public. It will then be reported to the Board of Health. You will be looking at various websites today.

Susan Quam from the Wisconsin Restaurant Association (WRA) spoke about online inspections being the wave of the future. The public has increased awareness of online inspections and they have a right to know this information. Milwaukee currently offers this and Quam worked with them in setting theirs up. It is a searchable database, only lists CDC risk factor violations and other criticals and non-criticals are not listed. They do not think scores should be posted since they are not relevant. If businesses are safe enough to be open, a score is not necessary. This is also an opportunity to educate the consumer about food safety. In other jurisdictions, the newspaper does the posting and that has not been successful. Handouts were provided on Milwaukee, Toronto and San Diego's on line reporting system. The point was to show how many different systems are out there. The committee members should be thinking about what criteria to put together for what goes on the website. The question was asked if there would be time to educate the operators. It was suggested that we could communicate through Food Facts to update them. It was suggested that perhaps other operators could utilize this committee to communicate ideas or problems with this concept. It is important to make this a collaborative effort.

Set Date and Time of Next Meeting

April 2

July 30

November 12

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Madison Water Utility

Proposed Agenda:

Operator Issues and Updates

Develop Criteria for Online Reporting