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October 17, 2024

Written Comments to be Submitted into the Record of the  
Public Hearing on the Amendment of Town Law section 280-1  
: Water

Submitted by:  
Linda Miller



Prevention of tooth decay is not a luxury, but rather an essential component of long term good health. Tooth decay is not a trivial, but rather a serious condition. It is a bacterial infection that has impacts ranging from pain, poor nutrition and facial disfigurement to infections spreading to the sinuses, ears, lungs and potentially fatally to the heart and brain. In what other part of the body, except the teeth, would we put up with a preventable infection which often necessitates the actual removal of that body part?

It's often asserted that there are other sources of fluoride available, such as fluoridated toothpastes, mouthwashes and topical application at the Dentist's office, so community water fluoridation isn't necessary. Most parents know how difficult it is to get kids to brush their teeth, so imagine the situation of a parent getting home from the second job at bedtime and having to deal with toothbrushing. Consider the parent who has to buy toothpaste at the Dollar Store rather than the expensive brands at CVS. Also most insurance plans include dental care as an expensive add-on, leaving a large group of middle class families unable to afford regular preventative dental care. The prevention of tooth decay is a public health problem and should be treated as such.

Community Water Fluoridation can help spare our children from tooth decay and its potentially serious impacts on health and well-being.

The CDC ranks Community Water Fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.

So Yes--Let's get better dental health for our children by fluoridating our drinking water.

After years of delay, Yorktown was on path to get the benefits of fluoridated water for our children. Yet here we are—

debating if we want to take action so that our children can have fewer cavities. And as importantly—who gets to decide, based on what information.

Because Supervisor Lachterman pulled the plug on water fluoridation.

Supervisor Lachterman backed by a majority of the Town Board paused the fluoridation of Yorktown's drinking water. This decision is based on Mr. Lachterman's interpretation of a U.S. District Court ruling-- which is based on the Judge's interpretation of a meta study-- which may have little relevance to fluoride concentrations and delivery systems in the U.S. As with all therapeutic substances, the dosage makes the difference and in making a correlation (NOT A CAUSATION) between water fluoridation and I.Q in studies cited in the court case, total dosage was not controlled for, among other procedural missteps and misinterpretations.

So when does a pause turn into a full stop? There's a procedure in State Law for withdrawing from Community Water Fluoridation which the Town Board has so far ignored. The procedure requires public notice and comment opportunities, addressing these comments, a record of consultation with health professionals and the State Department of Health and providing alternatives to water fluoridation.

Instead, to pave the way for a full-stop, the Town Board has decided to amend the local law 280-1 dealing with water fluoridation.

The law goes from

“the public water supply of the Town of Yorktown shall be fluoridated” in consultation with the Westchester County Health District—note with input from public health professionals

To

“The Town Board may establish by resolution whether or how” Yorktown’s water supply will be fluoridated.

No input from the public or from health professionals required.

Some Town Board members have been quoted to the effect that they have “done their homework” and know where they come down on community water fluoridation. Who are they listening to? Experienced public health professionals or junk science? The people of Yorktown are entitled to know what data and research informs Town Board decisions, otherwise we can’t trust those decisions.

This proposed amendment is a very bad idea, giving the Town Board authority to make an important public health decision

without input from either the public or from professionals with a whole lot more expertise and experience than the Town Board. This amendment is a substantial change in the law and should not be passed.