

Notes from Hardwick's Board of Health

From Judith Kohn, former BOH Chair

I have pondered what the BOH public face is as it relates to our health. The Board knows we are at risk for several reasons. To be 'at risk' for poor health results from simply being alive in this place. Hopefully, we are in good health and the local Board of Health would like to prove it.

We will need to assess our place, our water, air, food, waste, and the prevalence of diseases in us and outside of us.

We need citizens to become aware of things that keep us well; and actions that can increase our level of threat. First, we must find out and document our current baseline level of health. This is done at the local level.

The current awareness about man-made molecules that nature cannot break down in our bodies or the environment, called PFAS, suggests Hardwick begin with our drinking water. Because of national lawsuits against the manufacturers of PFAS we can be party to the knowledge it will generate as well as the fund settlement if we are found to be contaminated.

Therefore, the Board of Health will begin efforts to make testing available and find ways to afford the costs of testing to prevent our internal and external degradation. We hope to engage and ensure Medical Environmental and Public Health methods for assessment and diagnosis of individuals or their surrounding environment that influence our health.

Regarding the discussion about whether or not to reopen and expand our Hardwick Landfill in Muddy Brook Patrill Hollow, I call for continued open-source public information regarding all intentions of the parties who will impact our lives and our health.

It is my concern that the stress caused by possible changes to our place of life—our air, water, soil, food safety, and our beauty and history that are crucial to our happiness and health — is also dangerous to our health.

This page will be a clearing house for information on all matters that impact our health. If you have scientific or anecdotal information that impacts the Health of the People and Place of Hardwick, submit it to the Board of Health so that we can create a Resource Library of Knowledge (Know-How) that bears on our individual and collective health.

We are this place and our life depends on it.

