

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
BROOKLYN-QUEENS AQUIFER FEASIBILITY STUDY

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING: January 6, 2005

MINUTES

The 25th meeting of the Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer (BQA) Feasibility Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on Thursday, January 6, 2005 at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center. (See Attachment A for Attendance List.)

Helen Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus & Associates (HNA), opened the meeting by asking for comments on the Minutes of the December 2nd meeting. There were no comments, and the Minutes were adopted unanimously. She then facilitated a discussion of follow-up items from that meeting:

- Ms. Neuhaus noted that copies of the West Side Corporation (WSC) Community Protection Plan (CPP) were sent to the CAC and Scientific Review Panel (SRP). The SRP also received copies of the Worker Health and Safety Plan (HASP) and statewide and site-specific Vapor Intrusion Study plans. After explaining that the CPP and HASP are draft versions that will be revised to reflect CAC and SRP comments, she emphasized that intrusive work at the site will not begin until both plans are finalized. Ms. Neuhaus also mentioned that a conference call was held with SRP members Dr. Len Lion, Cornell University, and Dr. Paul Liroy, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, on December 21st to discuss the SRP's concerns regarding the CPP and HASP. She added that a recap of this discussion will be provided as a separate agenda item.
- As requested, a copy of the submission for the American Council of Engineering Companies Engineering Excellence Award was available at the meeting.
- Ms. Neuhaus announced that the community meeting to discuss Station 6 architectural design is scheduled for January 31st at Amity Baptist Church in Jamaica. She added that draft versions of the agenda, flyer and fact sheet for the meeting will be reviewed with the CAC as a separate agenda item.
- The BQA project website has been updated to include information on remediation of the WSC site, including the FAQs document and the flyer announcing the December 13th Public Meeting. Other documents, including the meeting report, will be added as they become available.
- Referring to a request for examples of successful application of Electrical Resistance Heating (ERH) in residential areas by Thermal Remediation Services, the WSC subcontractor, Ms. Neuhaus cited the following:
 - In Western Springs, Illinois, ERH was used at a commercial shopping center in close proximity to a high school and residences. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic directly on top of the remediation area was unrestricted throughout the project. The remediation resulted in a 99% reduction in perchloroethylene (PCE) concentrations in the soil.
 - At a naval base in Charleston, South Carolina, ERH was successful in reducing PCE levels in groundwater by 95%.

- In Chicago, Illinois, ERH is currently being used at an industrial site similar to the WSC property in terms of its proximity to a residential community. The clean-up team expects to achieve its goal of a 98.5% reduction of the chemical trichloroethylene by early 2005.
- Meetings to discuss WSC safety plans and upcoming construction activities with the New York Police Department and New York City Fire Department will be scheduled following issuance of the Notice to Proceed, which is set for January 10th.
- Ms. Neuhaus noted that Nicole Brown, Malcolm Pirnie, will incorporate the WSC schedule into the overall BQA project schedule, as soon as the clean-up schedule is finalized.

Project Update

West Side Corporation Site Clean-Up

Don Cohen, Malcolm Pirnie, reiterated that the project team – including representatives from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the URS Corporation – participated in a conference call with SRP members Dr. Lion and Dr. Liroy on December 21st. The call was scheduled to review SRP comments on the CPP and HASP. Major concerns included the generic nature of the documents; lack of clarity in defining an emergency event and appropriate emergency notification procedures; and protection of Atlantic Express Bus Company employees. Dr. Liroy emphasized that while many other hazardous waste sites are surrounded by open fields, the WSC site is surrounded by an active community, whose protection is of utmost importance. He and Dr. Lion also questioned the advisability of evacuation, as described in the CPP. Both noted that in the unlikely case of vapor emissions exposure to the community, it would probably be safer to direct residents to stay indoors and close their windows. Mr. Cohen noted that these plans are draft versions, to be revised by Clayton Group Services following its receipt of a Notice to Proceed. He added that the SRP and CAC will have an opportunity to review revised versions of the CPP and HASP and reiterated that there will be no intrusive work on the site until the plans are finalized.

Mr. Cohen announced that the remediation contract was approved by the New York State Comptroller's Office on December 20th and forwarded to Clayton on December 30th. The Notice to Proceed will be issued on January 10th, to be followed by a Pre-Construction meeting on the following day. The Pre-Construction meeting will kick off a series of biweekly progress meetings to update members of the project team on all aspects of the clean-up operation. The CAC was invited to send a representative to the meetings, which will be held on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. Following a discussion among CAC members, it was decided that Linda Hazel will attend the first meeting (January 11th), Manuel Caughman will attend the second meeting (January 25th), and Jeff Diggs will attend the third meeting (February 3rd).¹ CAC representation at future meetings will be determined by the Committee, as meeting dates are set.

Ms. Neuhaus recapped the December 13th Public Meeting at St. Benedict the Moor Church, noting that the presentation was highly informative and provided a clear and thorough discussion of the remediation schedule and processes. After praising Ms. Hazel for a "job well done" as emcee of the event, she expressed disappointment with attendance at the event. Specifically, Ms. Neuhaus

¹ Subsequent to the CAC meeting, the second meeting was rescheduled to January 27th; the date for the third meeting has not yet been finalized.

explained that although over 1,000 flyers were mailed to residents and approximately an equal number distributed to elected officials and community boards, only 25 persons (exclusive of the project team, CAC, and SRP) attended the meeting. Ms. Hazel commented that the low attendance was actually a sign of the community's trust in the CAC and the project. Mr. Diggs added that the few guests who did attend are active, well-connected members of the community who have passed on information from the meeting to other residents. He recalled hearing positive comments about the event from several neighbors who did not attend.

Station 24

Ms. Brown reported that the project team is still on track regarding progress at Station 24. She noted that DEP reviewed the contract documents and design specifications for the groundwater treatment system and met with Malcolm Pirnie in late December to discuss its comments. Malcolm Pirnie is currently incorporating DEP's recommendations and will submit a revised package shortly.

Station 6

Mr. Cohen informed the group that Malcolm Pirnie met with DEC's Spills Program unit regarding elevated levels of methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE, a gasoline additive) detected in wells around Station 6. DEC indicated that it has contacted the Citgo and Atlas gas stations on Merrick Boulevard, which are suspected to be the primary sources of MTBE contamination and asked them to submit investigative reports. Citgo is to submit the report by the end of January, while Atlas will submit its report by the end of March. Mr. Cohen noted that a nearby Amoco station has already undergone remediation. These reports will help confirm the source of MTBE contamination in the groundwater.

He then announced that the conceptual design report for the new Station 6 Groundwater Treatment Plant is 15% complete, which is sufficient for review at the upcoming Value Engineering (VE) workshop, scheduled for the week of January 24th. Mr. Cohen explained that the VE process, which is administered by the New York City Office of Management and Budget, involves analysis of all aspects of the new plant by a team of independent engineers and architects. Their role is to brainstorm alternative and possibly more cost-effective approaches to achieving the objectives of the Station 6 facility. At the end of the one-week workshop, the VE team will provide verbal feedback, which will be documented in a written report several weeks later. Following project team evaluation of the report, a reconciliation meeting will be held. For each suggestion made by the VE team, the project team may choose to implement the entire concept, part of the concept, or none of the concept. VE recommendations could include expanding the new Station 6 plant to handle a greater capacity of groundwater if a larger plant is determined to be more cost-effective than the current design. Alternatively, the VE team may approve the concept of this plant and use the same blueprint to build other facilities in the City.

In a final comment, Mr. Cohen added that a VE orientation session was held earlier in the day. At that time, the project team presented background information on Station 6 and how it relates to Station 24, clean-up of the WSC site and lowering of the groundwater table in Southeast Queens. He commented that the VE team specifically expressed interest in aspects of the design related to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. [LEED ratings are based on sustainable design, including use of energy efficient power and recyclable building materials.] Following the orientation session, the VE and project teams, joined by Ms. Hazel, toured the Station 6 site.

Issues raised during the ensuing discussion included the following:

- Ms. Hazel noted that a gas station on Guy R. Brewer Boulevard, between 108th and 109th Avenues, may be mishandling chemicals and suggested that the project team investigate the site.
- In a follow-up question, Mr. Diggs asked whether it is possible to investigate the sites of former gas stations to determine evidence of environmental damage. Mr. Cohen noted that prior to federal legislation in 1998, which required replacement of old gasoline storage tanks and installation of leak detection systems, the Petroleum Bulk Storage Registry listed every property that housed storage tanks equal to or exceeding 500 gallons. The registry will be used, as needed, depending on DEC findings regarding the Citgo and Atlas gas stations.
- In response to a question from Dr. Gilbert Hanson, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Mr. Cohen indicated that although monitoring wells are located near the MTA bus depot and the Amoco gas station, none are installed near Merrick Boulevard.
- Dr. Alan Rabideau, State University of New York at Buffalo, inquired about MTBE levels recorded at the Station 6 Pilot Plant. Mr. Cohen replied that during pilot testing, MTBE levels in the groundwater were as high as 350 parts per billion (ppb). He noted that during this stage, the wells had been running 24 hours a day for two weeks at a time. Later on, when samples were collected from wells reactivated for only 15 minutes at a time, MTBE levels of 150 ppb were detected.

In a follow-up question, Dr. Hanson asked whether MTBE levels were significantly lower in groundwater treated at the Pilot Plant. Mr. Cohen and Ms. Brown noted that although the treatment system at the Pilot Plant was not designed to remove MTBE or other volatile organic compounds, it did remove some.

- In response to a question from Ms. Hazel, Mr. Cohen explained that members of the VE team are senior-level professionals from private engineering firms around the country, including California, Massachusetts, Florida, and New York.
- Ms. Hazel remarked that the VE team, as well as the Art Commission, should not be concerned about the impact of construction on surrounding trees, as there is only one tree on the Station 6 property; the others are on private property. The project team agreed to include a photo board with the next Art Commission submission to give its members a clearer visualization of the site.

Discussion of Station 6 Residents Meeting

Ms. Neuhaus reiterated that a meeting with residents in the vicinity of the Station 6 Plant, to discuss architectural design of the facility, will be held on Monday, January 31st, at 7:00 P.M., at Amity Baptist Church. The meeting is being co-sponsored by New York City Councilman Leroy Comrie and DEP. After explaining that it is particularly important to reach out to persons living within sight distance of, or close proximity to, the plant, Ms. Neuhaus noted that her office will send flyers to approximately 400 residences in the area roughly bounded by 108th Avenue, 110th Avenue, Guy R. Brewer Boulevard and Merrick Boulevard. She asked the CAC to look at the map of streets selected for flyer distribution and to suggest any additional streets.

Ms. Neuhaus then reviewed the draft agenda for the meeting and asked the CAC and SRP for comments on the agenda, as well as on the draft flyer and fact sheet. (See Attachment B for a copy of the draft agenda and final flyer.) She also welcomed any thoughts on how to increase attendance at the event. A recap of the discussion that followed is provided below:

- Maggie Brown, a York College student, commented that the flyer should be more attractive and attention-grabbing. Dr. Liroy agreed, noting that the meeting objectives should be spelled out more clearly. Ms. Hazel mentioned that residents might not be concerned with attending the meeting as they trust Councilman Comrie to address any problems that arise. Mr. Diggs cautioned against revising the flyer in a way that might spark fear among residents, many of whom are already skeptical about government agencies. Mr. Caughman remarked that word-of-mouth is usually more effective than flyers in attracting people to a meeting.

Taking note of these comments, Ms. Neuhaus proposed changing the layout of the flyer to more prominently feature the proposed architectural design of the plant. She also asked CAC members to ‘spread the word’ about the meeting in their communities.

- Mr. Diggs noted that members of Community Board #12, as well as the pastor of Amity Baptist Church, will urge local residents to attend.
- Mr. Caughman offered to provide the project team with contact information for Fred Simmons, who is forming a new civic organization in the Station 6 area and may be willing to help publicize the meeting.
- Sara Pecker, DEP, suggested that flyers be posted on community bulletin boards in nearby supermarkets.
- In response to suggestions from the group, Ms. Neuhaus noted that it is illegal to place flyers in mailboxes. While others raised the possibility of door-to-door distribution, Ms. Brown commented that this is only helpful if those handing out the flyers are able to answer any project-related questions that may arise.
- Ms. Hazel suggested notifying community facilities, including the Amistad Child Care and Family Center, I.S. 8, and P.S. 40.
- In response to a question from Dr. Liroy, Ms. Neuhaus remarked that residents living in the vicinity of Station 6 have not necessarily seen data from the Pilot Plant. Dr. Liroy noted that it is important for those residents to appreciate the water treatment processes, as well as the architectural design.
- Commissioner Greeley mentioned that he will be prepared to discuss other topics that may arise at the January 31st meeting, particularly issues regarding sewer infrastructure in the area.
- In a final comment, Mr. Cohen noted that the model will be updated prior to the meeting to incorporate houses (for size comparison), as well as changes proposed at the November Art Commission meeting.

New Business

- The project team asked whether anyone had recently been in contact with Kenneth Gill. Mr. Diggs noted that Mr. Gill has not been well but is now feeling better and plans to resume his community activities in the near future.
- Commissioner Greeley announced that the City is about to enter the discovery phase of the lawsuit against MTBE manufacturers and storage facilities. He added that New York City is one of four areas to be fast-tracked in the lawsuit.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 3, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center, 188-11 Hillside Avenue, Jamaica Estates.

Follow-Up List

1. Revise CPP and HASP for SRP's review prior to the start of intrusive work at WSC site. Responsibility: DEC, URS, Clayton Group Services.
2. Coordinate CAC representation at January 11th, January 25th, and February 3rd WSC field meetings. Responsibility: HNA.
3. Consider assessment of a local gas station (Guy R. Brewer Boulevard between 108th and 109th Avenues) for possible environmental misconduct (Linda Hazel). Responsibility: Malcolm Pirnie.
4. Provide a photo board of the Station 6 property and its environs with the next Art Commission submission. Responsibility: Malcolm Pirnie.
5. Provide HNA with contact information on Fred Simmons to assist with distribution of Station 6 Public Meeting flyers. Responsibility: Manny Caughman.
6. Provide information on Station 6 Public Meeting to the Amistad Child Care and Family Center, I.S. 8, and P.S. 40 (Linda Hazel). Responsibility: HNA.
7. Revise the Station 6 Fact Sheet and Public Meeting flyer as per comments from the CAC and SRP. Responsibility: HNA.
8. Maintain contact with DEC Spills Program Group regarding investigation of MTBE contamination in the area of Station 6. Responsibility: Malcolm Pirnie.

Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer Feasibility Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, January 6, 2005

Attendance List

CAC Members/Alternates

Tracey Bowes
Community Board #12

Linda Caleb Hazel
A Better Day Inc./St. Benedict The Moor/
St. Bonaventure

Manuel Caughman
Community Board #12

Jeff Diggs
Councilman Leroy Comrie

Richard Hellenbrecht
Community Board #13

Irving Hicks
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Sarah Hicks
Resident/Brinkerhoff Action Association

Earl Roberts
113th Precinct Council

SRP Members

Jack Caravanos
Hunter College

Gilbert Hanson
State University of New York
at Stony Brook

Len Lion
Cornell University

Paul Lioy
University of Medicine and Dentistry
of New Jersey

Alan Rabideau
State University of New York
at Buffalo

Guests

Maggie Brown
Resident/York College Student

Andy Rousseau
Resident/New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Media

Jennifer Bisram
Queens Chronicle

Project Team

Nicole Brown
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Don Cohen
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Lillie Farrell
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Doug Greeley
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Mark Lanaghan
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Helen Neuhaus
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Sara Pecker
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Andrea Wong
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Bill Yulinsky
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