

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

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING: November 4, 2004

MINUTES

The 23rd meeting of the Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer (BQA) Feasibility Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on Thursday, November 4, 2004 at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center. (See Attachment A for Attendance List.)

Helen Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus & Associates (HNA), opened the meeting by welcoming back Dave Chiusano, Project Manager, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Phil Zimmerman, architect, Malcolm Pirnie. She noted the absence of Dr. Chip Kilduff, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, who was home awaiting the imminent birth of his child; Debora Hunte, who was recovering from a recent hospital stay; and Deputy Commissioner Doug Greeley, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), who was on vacation.

Ms. Neuhaus also introduced representatives of the firms that will be involved in the soil remediation program at the West Side Corporation (WSC) site: Rohan Tadas and Sanford Garrett, Clayton Group Services and Jon Sundquist, URS Corporation. In order to bring the new guests up-to-date on the role and composition of the CAC, she explained that the group includes residents, Community Board members, community activists and elected officials who have been meeting monthly over the past three years to discuss, evaluate and provide input on each component of the project. She further noted that this hard-working group of dedicated individuals has played a critical role in helping to progress several of the BQA projects, including remediation of the WSC site. In a final comment prior to self-introductions, Ms. Neuhaus cautioned the guests that the CAC and its Scientific Review Panel (SRP) will continue to challenge the project team with incisive questions; however she added that they will also be the project's most enthusiastic and persuasive advocates, provided that the work will benefit the community and 'do no harm.'

Ms. Neuhaus then asked for comments on the Minutes of the October 7th meeting. There were no comments, and the Minutes were adopted unanimously. Follow-up items from the October 7th meeting were described as being ongoing tasks, completed activities, or topics that would be discussed later in the meeting agenda. The one exception was the discussion on planned sewer improvement projects in Southeast Queens, which will be postponed until the December meeting when Commissioner Greeley will be present to address any questions and comments.

Project Update

West Side Corporation

Mr. Chiusano provided an update on the status of soil remediation work at the WSC site. He reported that submissions for the electrical resistance heating (ERH) and soil vapor extraction (SVE) protocols are being processed and that the construction contract is at the State Comptroller's Office. As a high priority project, he expects that the contract will be approved within 3-4 days. Mr. Chiusano added that DEC anticipates receiving the executed contract by November 15th, at which time the contractor will begin to mobilize at the site. Construction is expected to begin in December, with the ERH process starting after Christmas and continuing for

approximately 4-5 months (or until the point at which additional treatment would not significantly lower concentrations in the soil). As requested by the CAC, Mr. Chiusano will provide a detailed construction schedule to Nicole Brown, Malcolm Pirnie, for incorporation into the overall BQA project schedule, as soon as it is available.

Mr. Sundquist discussed the role of URS as construction manager for the WSC remediation project. He noted that URS developed the construction plans and specifications for the contract and established technical requirements for the contractor. During construction, URS will provide full-time oversight to ensure that work at the site is done in compliance with the contract specifications. Mr. Sundquist emphasized that he will be closely involved with on-site personnel throughout the process.

Mr. Tadas noted that he and his staff will oversee field work at the site. Initial activities will include setting up office trailers and other administrative tasks. In addition, the work will include the installation of monitoring wells (three sets, each to be installed at three depths) and the collection of soil samples. The trenching and pipe installation for the SVE process will be performed by a subcontractor.

Mr. Tadas explained that trenching activities and installation of wells and probes will involve some removal of soil from the site. Prior to transportation, the soil will be classified (hazardous or non-hazardous), containerized and sealed. It is estimated that 10 tons of hazardous and 64 tons of non-hazardous soil will need to be removed. The hazardous soil will be taken to a facility just outside Buffalo, NY for disposal, and the non-hazardous soil will be transported to a thermal treatment facility in Philadelphia, PA.

As a separate issue, Mr. Chiusano discussed conceptual plans for the vapor intrusion study that will be conducted to assess whether contamination at the WSC site has resulted in any potential human exposure to perchloroethylene (PCE) or trichloroethylene vapors in the surrounding neighborhood. He added that the study is being conducted at the direction of the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), as part of its new initiative for soil-gas testing in communities. Mr. Chiusano acknowledged the CAC's concern regarding air quality at P.S. 116 and requested that any additional recommendations for monitoring sites be forwarded to him. He noted that the Conceptual Plan for conducting the vapor intrusion study has been developed and is being reviewed by NYSDOH.

Mr. Chiusano then described the proposed two-step approach for conducting the vapor intrusion study. The first step will involve testing for subsurface soil gas within the streets around the site. In collaboration with NYSDOH, the data collected will then be used to determine which residences, if any, would be recommended for indoor air monitoring. The number of homes that would qualify for future testing could range from zero to twenty, depending on the data received. This data gathering and assessment will take approximately 30 days. Mr. Chiusano emphasized that if any residences are identified for indoor sampling, testing will only occur on a *voluntary* basis. He added that the decision to implement any remediation measures (e.g. installation of radon-type systems, etc.) in residences will be made by NYSDOH. With regard to scheduling, Mr. Chiusano explained that the best time to conduct the soil-gas testing is during the winter months when the potential for exposure is greatest.

A summary of questions and comments raised during the discussion is provided below:

- In response to a concern expressed previously by Dr. Alan Rabideau, State University of New York at Buffalo, Mr. Tadas confirmed that additional soil borings will be drilled and monitoring wells installed to ascertain whether the plume has begun moving to the southeast.
- Irving Hicks inquired whether the soil remediation process will result in air pollution. Mr. Tadas remarked that while minor volatilization may occur during trenching or well drilling activities, an air monitoring program, under guidance from the state, has been developed to prevent adverse effects on the community. Mr. Chiusano added that air monitors will be located at the site of ongoing work, as well as at the perimeter of the property, to continuously record dust and volatile organic compound (VOC) levels. If abnormal levels are detected in the air, appropriate shut-down measures will be implemented immediately. He noted that the Community Safety Plan, which will be available to the public once it is complete, will detail the program.
- In response to a follow-up question from Peter Richards, Mr. Chiusano and Mr. Tadas noted that volatilization occurs during trenching and drilling activities, when contaminants from the soil and water can be transferred into the air. However, they emphasized that the hazardous compounds would be containerized and destroyed before dispersing into the air. Mr. Sundquist and Mr. Sanford reiterated that on-site inspectors will monitor air levels at all times and that any abnormal data reading will result in immediate coverage of the work area and suspension of work.
- Mr. Richards inquired about potential health effects of improperly controlled volatilization. Mr. Garrett listed light-headedness, dizziness, and the appearance of intoxication as symptoms of hazardous vapor inhalation. He added that on-site workers would be the first to experience these effects, which would trigger suspension of work.
- Mr. Richards reiterated that a written contingency plan must be in place prior to the start of remediation, in order to document procedures if the remediation results in elevated emission levels either at the site or in the neighborhood. Mr. Chiusano confirmed that such a plan is being prepared.
- In response to a question posed by Linda Hazel, Mr. Garrett remarked that Clayton has performed several ERH installations in the midwest, including one commissioned by the Illinois Department of Environmental Protection, three located in residential area strip malls, and one at a six acre facility. He pointed out that while WSC is the company's first ERH project on the east coast, his team has extensive experience in the remediation services field.
- Earl Roberts asked about the availability of any pictures or diagrams of the construction or ERH process. Mr. Sundquist remarked that on-site work will resemble other operations involving soil excavation or well drilling. He pointed out that the most contaminated soil will not be dug up but will be treated on site. Highly visible electrodes will heat the contaminated soil; the resulting vapors will be captured and destroyed.
- Yvonne Reddick inquired about the level of on-site security. Mr. Tadas replied that security personnel hired by Clayton will monitor the site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additionally, the bus company's security staff will continue to patrol the area. Mr. Garrett added that the

immediate work site, as well as the entire WSC property, will be fenced. In a follow-up item, Ms. Reddick suggested that the security staff meet with local police and fire officials to discuss safety plans and review construction details; the project team agreed that such a meeting is necessary.

- Dr. Paul Liroy, University of Medicine and Dentistry-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, commented on the need for extensive community involvement, including public review and feedback on plans and remediation procedures. He noted that while the community may not understand the technical details of the system, they are extremely concerned about the possible dispersion of hazardous emissions during work at the site.

CAC members agreed, noting that previous experience with government agencies has left the community skeptical. They commented that while residents have been fighting for remediation of the WSC site for a long time, they might not be supportive of the project unless they understood the processes involved. It was therefore decided that a public meeting to discuss project details with the community will be scheduled as soon as possible. In order to provide the CAC and SRP with more detailed information, Mr. Chiusano agreed to forward the draft Health and Safety Plan, Community Safety Plan and Soil Gas Survey Sampling Work Plan to HNA for distribution as soon as they are available.

- A lengthy discussion ensued concerning possible community anxiety about the need for and ramifications of indoor soil-gas testing. It was therefore decided that a second community meeting will be held when the appropriate information is available, to cover issues regarding the soil-gas monitoring program.
- A discussion regarding the relative advantages and disadvantages of scheduling the initial public meeting prior to the official project groundbreaking was inconclusive. Reporting on the status of plans for the groundbreaking, Mark Lanaghan, DEP, noted that while he was trying to pin down a date for the event, its timing is dependant upon the schedules of elected officials. It was therefore decided to schedule the public meeting irrespective of the groundbreaking date.
- Manny Caughman recalled that NYSDOH had previously taken air samples from residences in the area and wondered if that data would be used in connection with the upcoming study. Mr. Sundquist noted that the data, which was collected in 2000-2001, did not include many residential samples. He indicated that the air quality levels measured at that time were within normal limits. Mr. Sundquist commented that it is highly unlikely that the upcoming soil-gas testing will produce data much different from the earlier data. Mr. Chiusano added that he will be coordinating with Andrew English, DEC, to obtain the full set of data.
- In response to a question from Richard Hellenbrecht concerning the proposed construction hours, Mr. Tadas replied that construction activities will take place between approximately 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. The contractor will coordinate with the bus company to work around its schedule, keeping lanes open when needed. In response to a follow-up question, Mr. Tadas remarked that noise will be similar to that at other construction sites and will include the sounds of back hoes, compressors, drills, and trucks. He added that noise levels will significantly decrease following the first 30 days of work. Mr. Chiusano added that the

ERH system and blowers for the SVE system will be enclosed, and Mr. Garrett commented that noise levels will be substantially lower beyond the property boundaries.

- Ms. Hazel speculated that many members of the community will be concerned that the bus company will remain on site throughout construction. In response to her comment that most people were under the impression that the buses would be moved prior to the start of work, it was noted that although some of the buses have been moved, there was not enough room to relocate all of the equipment. The project team reiterated that there is a contingency plan in the event that elevated levels of contaminants are detected in the air during construction.
- To address some confusion among CAC members, Dr. Rabideau clarified that the need for any indoor soil-gas testing would not result from the soil remediation activities. Instead, it would result from the possibility that hazardous vapors are rising from the underground plume. Any contaminant levels in homes would therefore be attributable to the migration of the groundwater plume and not to construction work at the site. CAC members commented that this point should be emphasized -- in simple, concise language -- during dialogue with residents. Ms. Neuhaus suggested that project information be distributed to residents in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, which would provide short, clear responses.
- In response to Ms. Hazel's comment that a number of new houses have been constructed near the site, Mr. Sundquist indicated that soil gas samples were collected when the homes were built. In a related comment, Mr. Diggs speculated as to the responsibility of sellers to inform buyers of their proximity to the WSC site and underground plume.
- Ms. Neuhaus remarked that because the project was reaching a heightened level of activity, the CAC may need to meet more frequently in order to address all relevant issues. The group agreed.

Discussion of Station 6 Plant

Mr. Zimmerman displayed an updated architectural model of the proposed facility, which will be shared with the New York City Art Commission at its November 17th Pre-Application meeting. The purpose of this initial meeting is to determine whether the design team is on the right track with regard to the architectural design. He noted that he has been working closely with Malcolm Pirnie's engineering staff to incorporate their requirements into the design while retaining the "soul" of the project. Mr. Zimmerman then reviewed the architectural goals of the project:

- Architecture should express and communicate what the process is all about – in the larger sense.
- Structure must be a good neighbor and recognize its unique place in the community. It must offer welcoming forms that reach out to the community and are enjoyable to live near.
- Architecture must be "transparent" in the sense that it expresses an openness and willingness to let everyone know that what is going on here is a positive thing while recognizing the need for security in a post-"9/11" world.

Mr. Zimmerman then outlined some of the proposed features of the facility:

- A stainless-steel, wave-shaped roof to mimic the qualities of water. Lights underneath the overhang would project downwards on each side of the building.

- A water feature along the four steps in front of the building to represent the area's aquifers. Water would cascade down the steps, each of which would be inscribed with a verse on the highlighted aquifer.
- A 'dark wall,' composed of glazed bricks reflecting the colors of the sea along the back wall of the building, which faces residences. This wall would not include windows, bright lights or other possibly distracting items, in order to avoid impacting residents of homes adjacent to the back of the property.
- A roof-top garden, planted with drought-tolerant plants, to provide the community with a beautiful, yet low-maintenance, public outdoor space. A handicapped-accessible elevator would be installed to accommodate guests going to the deck.
- Glass panels along the back wall of the visitors center to allow the public to view the filtration process and equipment without compromising security.
- Additional exhibits to provide visitors with information on the area's aquifers and water quality.
- Preservation of the existing large old trees that border the site.

Councilman Leroy Comrie asked about the size of the visitor's area and whether it could accommodate a community meeting. Mr. Zimmerman replied that the room, which is approximately 200 feet long, provides adequate space for community functions. In response to the Councilman's further question, Mr. Zimmerman clarified that the conference room identified on the floor plan within the administrative portion of the building would be used for DEP meetings, not public functions.

In response to a question from Mr. Richards, it was noted that the project would be eligible for the Percent for Art program. Mr. Zimmerman remarked that this could involve installation of an "art fence" around the property or some other piece of artwork at the new facility. Mr. Lanaghan added that some Community Boards have a special committee that helps to define Percent for Art projects and funding requirements.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Cohen acknowledged that Mr. Zimmerman was challenged with designing the architecture of the plant under very strict engineering requirements. His commendation of Mr. Zimmerman's work was greeted with applause.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, December 2, 2004 at 7 p.m.** at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center, 188-11 Hillside Avenue, Jamaica Estates.

Follow-Up List

1. Provide HNA with Health and Safety Plan, Community Safety Plan and Soil Gas Survey Sampling Work Plan for distribution to CAC and SRP. Responsibility: Dave Chiusano, DEC; HNA.
2. Suggest possible additional community locations for consideration during soil gas sampling. Responsibility: CAC.
3. Coordinate attendance at November 17th Art Commission Pre-Application Meeting with Councilman Leroy Comrie, Yvonne Reddick and Linda Hazel. Responsibility: HNA.
4. Contact CAC and SRP when date for WSC Groundbreaking Ceremony is finalized. Responsibility: HNA.
5. Schedule Public Meeting to discuss the start of WSC soil remediation. Responsibility: HNA, DEP, DEC, Malcolm Pirnie.

6. Provide Malcolm Pirnie with WSC project schedule for incorporation into overall BQA project schedules. Responsibility: Dave Chiusano, DEC.
7. Provide HNA with DEC's WSC mailing list for incorporation into overall BQA mailing list. Responsibility: Dave Chiusano, DEC.
8. Schedule meetings with New York Police Department and New York City Fire Department to discuss safety plans and upcoming construction activities at WSC. Coordinate with Yvonne Reddick. Responsibility: Dave Chiusano, DEC; DEP, HNA.
9. Prepare "Frequently Asked Questions" document about WSC site for distribution to community. Responsibility: HNA, DEP, DEC, Malcolm Pirnie.

Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer Feasibility Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, November 4, 2004

Attendance List

CAC Members/Alternates

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

Yvonne Reddick
Community Board #12

Peter Richards
Community Board #13

Earl Roberts
113th Precinct Council

SRP Members

Gilbert Hanson
State University of New York
at Stony Brook

Paul Lioy
University of Medicine and Dentistry
of New Jersey

Alan Rabideau
State University of New York
at Buffalo

Project Team

Nicole Brown
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Dave Chiusano
New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation

Don Cohen
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Lillie Farrell
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Sanford Garrett
Clayton Group Services

Mark Lanaghan
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Helen Neuhaus
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Jon Sundquist
URS Corporation

Rohan Tadas
Clayton Group Services

Andrea Wong
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Anita Wright
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Bill Yulinsky
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