

CAG Meeting Minutes December 4th 2013

Location: Upper Dublin Township Building

Item 1) Meeting called to order by CAG Co Chair Bob Adams. October CAG meeting minutes approved

Item 2). Reservoir update presentation by Eduardo Rovira (EPA)

Eduardo gave a powerpoint presentation to the CAG (see http://www.epaosc.org/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=2475) outlining the progress on the site in general and the reservoir in particular. The term 'waste cells' referred to in Eduardo's weekly operations bulletins was explained as referring to the area within the park parcel into which the excavated material from the Rose Valley creek and the Ambler Alley had been placed, levelled, covered with geotextile material and then covered with clean fill. It is expected that when finished, the entire park parcel will resemble a single, gentle sloping dome (approx 2% slope), peaking in the middle.

The remaining trees along the reservoir berm will be removed in due course and are currently in place merely as a temporary aesthetic barrier for the private residence(s) along Maple Street while other works continue. It is expected that when the reservoir has been dewatered these remaining trees will be removed from the BoRit site. The dewatering is expected to start in December and continue for 2-3 months until early spring 2014.

The dewatering process will result in the destruction of the current fish population. PA Fish and Boat advised EPA that removal of the fish was not a practical option as the fish would likely not survive the transit to a new location. The reptile population (turtles, snakes etc) are currently in hibernation and should remain undisturbed by the dewatering process until their exit from hibernation at about the same time as the dewatering process completes in the spring. At that time the EPA will monitor the reptile situation carefully in view of the potential hazard of snakes looking to relocate. In this regard it is expected that the reservoir along Maple Street will be filled in approximately 75ft back from the road and that the top of the reservoir would be raised an additional 5 ft with a 1:3 slope of the finished berm. At the Wissahickon side of the reservoir, the inner side of the berm would be increased by 15 ft in width (reducing the water volume accordingly). The berm on the Wissahickon side would be formed of clay while the berm on the other three sides would be formed from sand. The US Army Corps of Engineers advises that this configuration will prevent water from seeping through the berm on the Wissahickon side but allow absorption of water on the other three firmer sides to help offset water level rise from heavy rainfall events.

Debate ensued within the CAG membership on several issues including:

- The need for a containment system around the dewatering equipment (pumps, filters) to catch any spill from equipment failures. EPA acknowledged this point and will revert with their proposals.

- The current status of the reservoir as it pertains to environmental laws, i.e. is it officially a reservoir, a settlement pond, a lake etc. This issue was left undetermined, though apparently the lack of depth of the pond/reservoir has left it outside the parameters of some water bodies as defined by government agencies.
- Noise nuisance of the dewatering operation. Eduardo advised that the pumps being used are 'silent' pumps and as such there should be no noise nuisance from the operation, which will only be in operation during normal business hours (Mon.-Fri. 07.30-1700hrs).
- Destination of filtered solids. Eduardo advised that these would be fed back into the reservoir.
- Fate of reservoir after dewatering. The current use of the reservoir is as a waterfowl preserve, but some CAG members wondered whether the reservoir should be filled with clean fill as per the rest of the site, instead of being refilled with water and returned to its current use. As there is no knowledge as to the composition of the reservoir bed, nor its depth, it is understood that further site observations will have to be made after the dewatering process has been completed. Once the reservoir bed composition is better understood, further useful discussions can be had, but until then further discussion is mere speculation.
- The cost of the reservoir work is estimated to be approximately \$2 million, though this could change depending upon final investigation of the dewatered reservoir.

Item 3) Groundwater phase 3 report by Jill Lowe (EPA)

A powerpoint presentation was given by Jill Lowe regarding the complete investigation from the monitoring wells at BoRit and the background well installed in May on Maple street. The two main findings touched upon were that 1) the contaminated groundwater under BoRit does not appear to be affected by Ambler Borough public water well pump activity; 2) the groundwater under BoRit is impacted by extraction from Gessner Products on Main St. As this extraction is under an existing permit from PA DEP, EPA have passed their finding onto PA DEP who will investigate further and determine whether the permit needs to be amended to ensure that contaminated BoRit groundwater is not being drawn up into the Gessner products facility and subsequently discharged in an inappropriate manner into the Rose Valley or Wissahickon Creek watersheds.

Item 4) Action items: reviewed by David Froehlich revealing that CAG is up to date with all outstanding activities. The TASC grant outstanding question regarding ongoing and continuous ambient air monitoring of asbestos in the Ambler environs was outlined by RR&M chair Gordon Chase. A teleconference had been held that day with EPA and SKEO Solutions on this issue. Details of the call can be found at <http://www.boriticag.org/about/correspondence.html> To summarize, it was agreed that SKEO solutions would be able to provide technical assistance and that the grant could go ahead, resulting in a hoped- for report in time for the next CAG meeting in February 2014.

Item 5 other business:

Otis Hightower commented on West Ambler resident concerns regarding lack of awareness in that residential area of developments with BoRit. EPA advised that many door-to-door missions had been undertaken over the years in West Ambler to keep residents apprised of the progress at the site.

Sharon Vargas questioned whether local minority businesses were being offered work in the BoRit programme. Eduardo advised that activities were being undertaken by local small businesses in various fields including printing and signage, but that larger work was contracted on a national basis in accordance with government guidelines on set aside for small and minority businesses.

Gordon Chase asked about the progress of the demolished but exposed asbestos site next to the now renovated boiler house office park. PA DEP promised to return with an update on that project which is being considered for redevelopment, including housing.