

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP
BoRit Asbestos Area
Ambler / Upper Dublin / Whitpain, Pennsylvania

To: BoRit Asbestos Area Community Advisory Group
From: Schuyler Moon, CAG Intern
Date: June 30, 2008
Subject: **MEETING SUMMARY of the JUNE 4, 2008 SESSION**

Next Meeting

The next BoRit Asbestos Area CAG meeting will be held as follows:

Date: **Wednesday, August 6, 2008**
Time: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Location: First Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall, Ambler

Questions or comments regarding the upcoming meeting or about this summary, should be directed to Co-Chairs Bob Adams and Fred Conner.

CAG Members Attending. All Members of the CAG were present except as follows: Dave Caddick, Michelle Naps, Lora Werner, Barbara Allerton, Ted Emmett, Fred Conner, Bud Wahl, Paul Leonard and Roman Pronczak; Fred Conner was represented by his alternate Susan Mudambi, Bud Wahl was represented by his alternate Steve Ware, Paul Leonard was represented by his alternate Eric Lindhult, and Roman Pronczak was represented by his alternate Jim Blanch.

Observers

About twenty observers were present at this session including: Peter Lowry, Jerome Charen, Bernadette Dougherty, Peter Phillips, Andrew Salvadore, Phillip Heimlich, Mary Maxion, and Tim Hughes.

Meeting Highlights

- Welcome and Administrative Announcements
- History of Whitpain Park given by EPA Representative, Jack Kelly
- Discussion of requests for TASC services
- Brief Reports from select Working Groups
- Introductions of new CAG Member nominees
- Election new Member to represent the Business Owner Stakeholder Category

CAG Co-Chair Bob Adams opened the meeting by announcing that Co-Chair Fred Conner was unable to attend. Mr. Conner's alternate, Susan Mudambi of Whitpain Resident's Association was in attendance in his place.

Mr. Adams then reviewed the guidelines for meeting conduct and the proposed agenda. There were no comments or questions about the proposed agenda.

Mr. Adams asked if there were any questions or comments about the meeting summary from May. A CAG member asked if the corrections that she suggested were made. Mr. Adams responded that he would be resubmitting an edited version of the May meeting summary. Another member commented that EPA Representative, Larry Johnson, had addressed a meeting with observer Phillip Heimlich and it had not been included in the May summary. Mr. Adams responded that the information regarding the meeting with Phillip Heimlich would be added to the summary from May.

This was followed by some brief announcements.-

- EPA intern, Kari Saylor, announced to the CAG that she would be gathering info and conducting research on the EPA's interaction with the community. She requested that CAG members share input on the strengths and weaknesses of the EPA's interaction with the community and gave a contact number to reach her with any information members would like to provide (215- 814- 5547). It was noted to CAG members that she would be added to the email list. There were no objections to adding EPA intern, Kari Saylor, to the CAG's email list.
- CAG member, Flo Wise provided a Fact Sheet from the PA DEP on Environmental Justice to all in attendance. It was noted that Mrs. Wise had been researching Environmental Justice and discovered that Ambler Borough does qualify as an Environmental Justice Community. She added that the Environmental Justice Coordinator, Reginald Howard, was available to attend the CAG meeting in September and provide more information on Environmental Justice Communities.
- EPA Representative, Larry Johnson, announced that EPA Representative, Eduardo Rovira, was unable to attend the meeting due to work related circumstances.
- Mr. Johnson also announced that an EPA Field Office would be opening at 324 West Maple Street in conjunction with ATSDR and PA DEP. He noted that an asbestos health and information office would be available to the public as well. There was no information on an opening date or hours of operation at this time.
- Mr. Johnson explained that the Topographical Survey of the site was ongoing, but he had no other information he could provide at this time on any other removal actions.

Next, EPA Representative, Larry Johnson, addressed some unanswered questions from the previous meeting (refer to May Meeting Summary for Questions).

- Regarding **Q-1**, Any result of any test or survey completed by the EPA is made available to any citizen through the EPA website.
- Regarding **Q-2**, The actual dollar amount is included in the *Action Memorandum*.
- Regarding **Q-3**, The amount is determined by an independent Government cost estimate.
- Regarding **Q-4** and **Q-5**, The possibility of a barrier for the reservoir or breaking the site into sections to complete the work are both part of the design process. Will have to check and get back to the CAG on any information regarding these topics, if available at this time.

Mr. Johnson noted that the NPL proposal was still in Washington and the release of the Federal Register Notice should be sometime in September.

At this time questions and comments were taken from CAG members and answered by EPA Representative, Larry Johnson.

Q-1. Are you privy to any information on the NPL proposal?

A-1. No, if not proposed then the process is still closed to everyone besides the EPA.

Q-2. Questions are supposed to be directed through the CAG Co-Chairs, but can the EPA take outside questions?

A-2. Questions from the community should be directed through the representative from that area serving on the CAG. For example, a CAG member serving as a representative for Lower Gwynned can take questions from the community members in Lower Gwynned, but must direct them through the CAG. Other community members from different areas should direct their questions through the CAG member representing their particular area. Also, questions should come through members not alternates.

Q-3. Will the asbestos information office be open to everyone?

A-3. Yes.

Comments from CAG members-

- Email is an ineffective way of getting questions answered and overall communication between members and organizations.
- Bring questions to the group and then address them.
- Email is good for questions in between meetings.
- In order to address erratic email answers, maybe we should send questions and answers to the whole group.
- The Co-Chairs should know what is going on and all requests should go through them.

Presentation of the History of Whitpain/Wissahickon Park Site-

The presentation was given by EPA Representative, Jack Kelly. In the presentation the park is referred to as Wissahickon.

Before starting Mr. Kelly noted that he was an On-Scene Coordinator and helped out at the site. He also noted that he was simply reviewing the information from the EPA's files on the history of the park site. The presentation will be available at the EPA website.

Presentation Outline:

- 1897-1988 there was onsite waste disposal of asbestos containing materials East of Butler Pike until 1970's and West of Butler Pike until 1960's.

- Two companies, Keasbey & Mattison and Turner & Newhall, produced asbestos containing products from 1897-1962.
- Aerial photography suggests asbestos waste disposal in the area in 1937 and probably earlier.
- In 1960's, photos suggest piles were leveled, covered with soil and vegetated.
- Two rows of factory homes were removed from the park area from 1959-1964.
- A photo from 1967 shows the basketball court and a small building in the park.
- A photo from 1970 shows that a baseball field was added between 1967 and 1970.
- The park is 10 to 15 feet above street level, so there is probably about that much asbestos pile and cover combined.
- In the early 1970's to early 1980's the PA DEP and EPA investigated the piles East of Butler not West of Butler.
- The EPA collected soil samples at the park in December of 1983.
 - They were apparently asked to do so by the Township while working at Locust Street piles.
 - The samples taken in 1983 ranged from 5% to 35% asbestos depending on the depth of the sample taken.
- In July of 1984, Whitpain received a NESHAPS violation from the PA DEP.
- In October of 1984, the CDC recommended that; "Every effort be made to prevent human exposure to asbestos on site."
 - Again, in October of 1984, twenty-one samples were taken, three of which were from along Maple Street. Five of the samples contained 1% asbestos; the rest did not detect any asbestos.
 - By the end of October 1984 the park was closed.
- In December of 1984, seven on-site vacuum, four soil core and ten surface samples were taken from the park. Seven additional vacuum samples were also taken from nearby yards and Fort Washington State Park. The outcome of these samples was that there was no difference between the samples taken at Fort Washington State Park and the site. EPA concluded that asbestos on the park site was not a problem.
- In January 1985, the CDC recommends that a plan be formulated in order to reopen the park.
- Finally in 1996, Rohm & Haas, EPA and PA DEP agree to cooperate to have the park reopened. It was noted that Rohm & Haas was not a generator of waste at the site.
- In June of 1996, 93 samples were taken from the surface to 14 inches below the surface.
 - All but 6 samples showed asbestos ranging from trace to 15%.
 - Most samples were in the range of 1-3%.
 - Generally, deeper samples had higher percentages of asbestos.
- By October 1997 a construction cost estimate for the chosen remedial alternative had been completed.
 - This included a park surface cover and the stabilization of the Wissahickon and Rose Valley creek banks.
 - The cost estimate was \$2.4 to \$3.6 million.
- The Township could not obtain funding, so the work was never done and the park remained closed.
- In April 2006, the EPA conducted the most recent site assessment,

- Multi-media sampling was conducted after controversy surrounding a development proposal on the BoRit pile.
- In October 2006, EPA removal sampling begins.
 - 25 surface soil samples were collected across the park.
 - 5 ranged from 0.1% to 0.3% asbestos
 - All other samples were below 0.1% asbestos
 - Did not sample obvious areas: asbestos content known to be up to 35% from historic sampling.
- In December 2006 an ATSDR health consultant recommends covering exposed park areas and continuing access restrictions to the site until EPA completes mitigation activities.
- In April 2008, the EPA prepares an *Action Memorandum* to address stream banks, physical security of site and exposed areas on sites.

Questions and comments from CAG members, regarding the history of the Whitpain park site, were taken at this time and answered by EPA Representative, Jack Kelly.

Q-1. How much of the park is currently exposed?

A-1. There is a good amount of exposed stream banks, so a rough estimate would be about 5% to 7%.

Q-2. Is there an area of the park that does not have any asbestos where a boys and girls club could be located?

A-2. Don't know.

Comments made by CAG members-

- The site was supposed to be remediated every ten years by being recovered with dirt and capped.
- There are three streams in the Mount Pleasant area: Rose Valley, Wissahickon and Tannery Run.

Discussion of Requests for TASC Assistance

CAG Co-Chair Bob Adams opens the floor to any member wishing to comment on the possibility of requesting a Brownfield or Health expert from TASC for information and assistance to the CAG.

- CAG member Joanne Walker informs the CAG that any site receiving federal money for NPL or removal does not qualify as a Brownfield under statutes.
- In response to Mrs. Walker's comment, a CAG member would like to know if the possibility for land reuse/revitalization after the site has met applicable requirements exists.

- EPA Representative, Larry Johnson, explained that any possibility of building on the site or reusing it in any way would not be discussed until later on after the Institutional Controls are applied.
- A CAG member points out that a Brownfield is not unrestricted use of the property, so maybe this is the direction we should take if trying to reuse the land.
- EPA Representative, Larry Johnson, reiterates that any site receiving federal money whether past/present or NPL does not qualify for Brownfield status.
- The state must go through the EPA to obtain Brownfield status and therefore the site would not qualify at the state level either after receiving federal money.
- It is concluded that Brownfield's are a waste of the CAG's time.
- A CAG member points out that not obtaining Brownfield status does not exclude the CAG from discussing land revitalization possibilities.
- Another member comments that EPA standards on asbestos removal have not changed since 1975 on piles like the one in question.
 - Standards being used now are the same as the White Hills antiquated standards.
 - EPA Representative, Eduardo Rovira, previously said that the Removal Action is the final action that the EPA will take on the site.
 - Since EPA has no plans to evaluate the park site in the future, talk about revitalization or reuse of the area is futile when it is not known what is present below six inches.
- In response a member comments that the removal action is not the end of actions taken on site if the site makes the NPL.
- EPA wants to look at revitalization possibilities as removal actions continue.
- A CAG member asks when and how will land reuse potential be determined. The response given was that covering the exposed areas of the site depends on someone wanting to put private money into the site, and then the EPA will monitor the site. Also, any land reuse option for the site after remedial actions are complete should not include any type of drilling. For example, this would include putting down a slab of concrete or paving and then building on it.
- Some comments are made in reference to the idea of requesting a health expert from TASC.
 - ATSDR is currently doing a health study.
 - The health study being conducted by ATSDR is only looking at existing data.
 - If NPL proposal comes back no then the only chance for reconsideration of NPL listing is if new information exists. A health study may be able to provide new information.
 - CAG member, Susan Curry suggests requesting TASC assistance to provide information on doing a study and how that could benefit the CAG in light of bringing new information to the table in case of no NPL and also to find out what the time frame is for such a study and what information could be gathered.
- CAG member Joanne Walker suggests that CAG member Susan Curry put her request for TASC help with information on conducting a study into a paragraph and send to Co-Chair Bob Adams. Mr. Adams can then send the request for TASC services to CAG member Dr. Emmett for him to proofread and make sure correct technical terms are used as well as clarify exactly what kind of help the CAG is looking for. The motion was seconded by a CAG member and then passed.

Working Group Reports

1. Community Awareness Group: Chair- Diane Morgan, Sharon McCormick, Observer- Peter Lowery
 - 5098 signatures are on the NPL petition.
 - Politicians are involved. Met with Governor Rendell and gave a packet of information.
 - Allison Schwartz's letter is currently with Steven Johnson.
 - State officials, Friends of Wissahickon, West Ambler Civic Association, Ambler Civic Association and CWA are all sending letters to the Governor.
 - At this point have not yet heard from Casey or Specter.
 - Need more support from CAG in getting signatures for the NPL petition. Out of 25 members, only three are getting signatures.

2. Rules Committee: Chair- Joanne Walker, Larry Johnson, Eileen Fournier
 - Plan to make suggestions regarding the voting and nomination process.
 - Idea of having an executive or advisory team to help Co-Chairs with administrative tasks.
 - Refine attendance requirements.
 - Look at circumstances for executive session appropriateness and outline for inclusion in charter.
 - Examine the document that CAG has been using as a charter and how to make its operating procedures better for the future.

Observer Comments

- The way the site is characterized as being behind McDonald's is misleading.
- Leaves are covering the asbestos lightly, but if someone took a rake and raked the leaves away then asbestos would be visible. "Spotty covering is an \$8.8 million dollar joke!"
- Aerial photos show white in winter when there is little growth covering the ground.
- EPA Representative, Jack Kelly, noted that the majority of money allotted for the removal actions underway is being used to stabilize the stream banks.
- In response to member and observer concerns about the actual material and thickness of the soil cover proposed for the removal action, EPA Representatives say that they do not have information about the soil cover at this time and it will depend upon the NPL decision. Even though the EPA Representatives cannot say how or to what extent the soil cover will entail, they explain that soil will cover exposed areas, but with just a removal action the entire site will not be covered.

Questions were taken from observers and answered by EPA Representatives Larry Johnson and Jack Kelly.

Q-1. Since Eduardo previously said there would be no follow up after removal actions, how will we know the actions are effective?

A-1. Be patient because EPA cannot answer now and will have to await NPL decision. If no NPL then EPA will have to readdress the issue of effective cover for the site. If site does go on the NPL, hopefully it will get a better cover.

Q-2. If the site is just covered up then how will this affect the knowledge and information about how much asbestos is actually there?

A-2. EPA does not really care about how much asbestos is actually there. What is important is the ability to cover what is exposed.

In response to the answer to question #2, an observer commented that in the case of an extreme flood or rainstorm no one would know the volume of asbestos that is actually on-site, therefore we will not know how this will affect future generations.

New Member Nominee Introductions.

Nominees to replace Ron Curtis of Final Touch Salon representing the Ambler Business Community each introduced themselves to the CAG. The CAG then had a short period to ask each nominee questions.

Nominees for Ambler Business Owner Stakeholder Category:

1. Jerome Charen- Attorney that owns law firm at 140 E. Butler Avenue, represents mostly private and non-profit companies, would like to help CAG achieve results.
2. Bernadette Dougherty- Owns a chocolate shop in Ambler, former Main St. Manager in Ambler, has rental properties in Ambler, started Cho Cho's train shop as first business in Ambler and is generally involved and concerned about community welfare.
3. Peter Phillips- Architect and business owner in Ambler for three years.

Nominees and observers then left the room, so the CAG could discuss and vote on the nominees in executive session. Bernadette Dougherty was elected to be the newest CAG member.

CAG Co-Chair Bob Adams announced that the Upper Dublin Township Municipal Building's meeting spaces were not available for the first Wednesday in July. He suggested that, barring any significant developments, the CAG take the month of July off and reconvene in August. There were no dissenting opinions voiced to no meeting in July.

At 9:30pm the meeting adjourned.