

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

To: BoRit Asbestos Area Community Advisory Group
From: Schuyler Moon
Date: October 29, 2008
Subject: **Summary of the Wednesday, October 1st 2008, BoRit CAG Meeting**

Next Meeting.

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

Date: Wednesday, November 5th 2008
Time: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Location: Upper Dublin Township Meeting Room
801 Loch Alsh Avenue
Fort Washington, PA 19034

If you have questions or comments regarding the upcoming meeting or about this summary, please contact CAG Co-Chairs Bob Adams and Fred Conner.

CAG Attendees.

All Members were present except for: Susan Curry who was represented by her Alternate Andrew Salvadore, Sharon McCormick who was represented by her alternate Mary Maxion (Mrs. McCormick did observe most of the meeting), Bob Adams, Bernadette Dougherty Joanne Walker, and the PADOH representative. The Ambler Parcel Owner, who has an open invitation to join the group, was again not present.

Observers.

Approximately 15 Observers were present for at least part of the meeting.

Meeting Highlights.

- Welcome and Administrative Announcements
- Information on EPA's Public Meeting on 9/30 regarding BoRit's Proposed NPL Listing
- Work Group Reports
- Discussion on Ongoing Removal Work and Remediation Program
- Presentation: "*Environmental Justice and the BoRit Site*"
- Discussion on the CAG's Formal Response to BoRit's Proposed NPL Listing

CAG Co-Chair Fred Conner opened the meeting by welcoming all Members and Observers in attendance and reviewing the guidelines for meeting conduct. Mr. Conner noted that CAG Co-Chair Bob Adams could not attend the meeting due to a family emergency. He further noted that several other Members were unable to attend including Rules Committee Chair, Joanne Walker. In Ms. Walker's absence, Mr. Conner asked Rules Committee Member, Eileen Fournier, to help moderate the session.

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Mr. Conner asked if there were any questions or comments on the meeting summary from September. TASC representative Mike Lythcott commented that his name was misspelled. There were no other comments on the September meeting summary and it was approved by consensus.

Mr. Conner then asked if there were any comments or suggestions on the proposed agenda. There were none.

A few additional announcements were then made:

- Mr. Conner announced that observers were welcome to join the email distribution list by signing the sign-in sheet available on the back table.
- CAG Member Anne Misak invited the CAG to join Clean Water Action in honoring CAG Member, Sharon McCormick's dedication to the community at an event on Friday between 6pm-9pm at Boathouse #2 on Boathouse Row.
- Mr. Conner noted the attendance of the former Executive Director of the WVWA, Mr. Froehlich. Mr. Froehlich commented that he was attending the meeting in his official capacity as President of the Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve.

EPA's Public Meeting on 9/30 regarding BoRit's NPL Listing.

EPA Representative, Larry Johnson updated the CAG on the EPA's public meeting that took place on 9/30/08. Mr. Johnson said there was a good turnout of people at the meeting, including a lot of interested people and new faces from the community. He explained that the information the CAG had been given was simply expanded upon in order to help the public better understand. He further noted that these meetings are done because the general public does not read the Federal Register. Mr. Johnson reminded the CAG that the response period to the proposed NPL listing of the BoRit Site ends on November 3, 2008. Two new EPA Team Members that will be working on the Site through its remedial phase were introduced by Mr. Johnson. They are Stacie Peterson, the lead remedial project manager for the Site and Joe McDowell who will be working closely with Ms. Peterson. Ms. Peterson informed the CAG that hard copies of the presentation distributed at the public meeting were available at the back table. Mr. Johnson concluded by saying that the CAG should be patient because remedial actions compared to removal is a much longer process with 5-6 years being a conservative estimate.

Workgroup Reports.

1. Health, Environment, Risk & Safety (HERS) Workgroup – Dr. Michelle Naps

- The group has been working on a formal response document to the ATSDR Health Consultation report while the public comment period is still ongoing. The six-page response document was sent out through email to Members. It was noted that all agency representatives may not have received the document. HERS Group would be happy to provide anyone a copy upon request.

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- Group Members felt that analyzing the ATSDR report for comprehensiveness and completeness had helped each of them gain a better understanding of potential health implications and the strengths and weaknesses of the report. They would like for ATSDR to elaborate on some of the issues discussed in the report in order help clarify certain items. For example, instead of just showing a calculation of how many fibers per day is an acceptable level, the report should explain how many cc's inhaled per day can affect human health.
- ATSDR Representative, Lora Werner, informed the CAG that the final version of the report will include a section that responds to all comments issued within the comment period and be published with any final comments.
- The group is currently working on understanding what is happening with the epidemiology analysis that is taking place around the Site and is in contact with the official investigators. The HERS Group expects to submit comments on the next report.
- CAG Member, Dr. Emmett thanked the HERs Group for their diligent work. He then commented that different viewpoints and thinking through things together has been beneficial. CAG Co-Chair Fred Conner suggested the CAG discuss the option of endorsing the document publicly.

2. Removal/ Remediation and Monitoring Oversight (R/R&M) Workgrp.- Eric Lindhult

- The Group met last Monday to discuss their response to the current Health and Safety Plan. Mr. Lindhult thanked Andrew Salvadore for drafting the response document. The issues that the group would like to address include the prepared plans for dealing with asbestos, tree removal on-Site, adherence to the Health and Safety Plan, and photos on the EPA's BoRit website.
- The stream bank stabilization plan was previously addressed by the Group with the help of the TASC consultants. The Group reported that the stream bank stabilization plan seemed reasonable and appropriate.
- At this time the Group is working on getting more information on how the asbestos removal will occur and is looking into third-party assistance in reviewing the removal work. The Group would like to see TASC consultant, Michele Bouchouk, visit the Site periodically during removal activities and observe the work.
- In response to the Group's suggestions, EPA representative, Jack Kelly explained that the current health and safety documents are being revised and merged into a single plan. Mr. Kelly requested that the group wait until there is one unified document to issue a final response.

Questions and comments from Members followed the R/R&M report. Questions were answered by EPA representatives Eduardo Rovira and Jack Kelly.

Q-1. What happened to the idea of TASC Consultant, Michele Benchouck, observing removal activities at the Site?

A-1. We will have to discuss the possibility of this happening because it is an unusual request. A meeting with Michele Benchouck, the Removal/Remediation and Monitoring group and EPA representatives would be the logical place to start.

Q-2. If the Site goes on the NPL will the EPA still have oversight?

A-2. Yes, EPA remains the lead agency in charge of Site.

Q-3. In reading the health and safety documents, but not having the ability to visit the Site, it seems that the EPA and contractors may not have a sense of urgency and attention to health and safety issues. Is the oversight really working?

A-3. The current Health and Safety Plan is somewhat generic and needs to be revised. We are following the standard practices and not planning to stop work as long as we know what needs to be updated in the documentation. If there are no recorded emissions coming from work on-Site, there is no reason to stop work. EPA acknowledges the comments and concerns of the CAG. The documentation should be more specific. The Health and Safety Plan is being rigorously enforced even as we make revisions. It is important to remember that once construction starts, there is less of a risk because everything is already covered. The sections currently being worked on will be finished before work stops for the winter months.

C-1. As a layperson I should not have to drive by the Site and see standards of practice not being followed.

C-2. It is a waste of time and tax dollars to try and oversee the EPA. The EPA has all the proper expertise and is following standard procedures and best practices. Nothing pointed out thus far can harm the community.

C-3. EPA does have expertise, but the TASC Program, since it is engaged, can bring a lot of expertise to the table and help resolve some of the lingering trust issues in the community.

C-4. A new member of the EPA Site Team has previously worked on a similar Site in Libby, Montana.

3. Rules Committee - Chair Joanne Walker

- Ms. Fournier reported for Ms. Walker. The Group did not meet this month. Ms. Fournier did put the CAG address table into a spreadsheet and distributed it for review. The Committee will meet next month to continue its review of the CAG's Charter.

4. Community Awareness (CA) Workgroup - Diane Morgan

- Ms. Morgan reported that she was able to get 65 signatures for the NPL petition at Lower Gwynedd day. She also noted that during the response period for listing the BoRit Site on the NPL, it is important to get letters out. Sharon McCormick was able to get ten letters on her own and others should try as well.
- Ms. Morgan concluded by saying that she would like for the Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve to write a letter advocating NPL listing.

5. Future Plans Workgroup - Sal Boccuti

- The Group had two meetings since the last CAG meeting and is planning to meet regularly an hour before the monthly, Public CAG Meeting. Everyone is welcome to join these workgroup meeting meetings.
- Two emails explaining the Groups views were sent to everyone on the CAG's email list. The main points from these were:
 - The Group would like to involve as many people connected to the Site as possible (i.e. landowners, municipalities, county officials, and legislators).
 - The Group's consensus was that the Site should be fully remediated so that it can again be of value to the community. TASC Consultant Michele Benchouk explained to the Group that the kinds of development envisioned for the Site could influence the type of remediation and vice versa.
 - A statement of economic benefits from the CAG could help. Details on this will be available in the report and 18 months is the time period given for developing a statement of economic benefits.
 - Since a period of five to ten years may be necessary to complete the remediation, the owners and municipalities should be thinking about budgeting funds for the future use of the Site. Grants or other funding should be pursued.
 - Ideas from different stakeholders and owners included: a Boys and Girls Club occupying about three acres; improving the streetscape around the Waterfowl Preserve and leaving the reservoir as is; creating a walking tract through the old park Site. Whitpain Township has no current plans and is awaiting completion of the EPA actions.

Questions and comments from CAG Members followed the Future Plans group's report and were answered by EPA representatives Larry Johnson, Eduardo Rovira and Jack Kelly.

Q-1. After everything is completed, who owns the property?

A-1. The current owners will remain the property owners after work is completed.

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Q-2. Would a statement of economic benefit make a difference in what happens with the Site?

A-2. It could be helpful in projecting future uses. Different projected future uses could drive the cleanup in a different direction.

Q-3. Is it better for the EPA process when a group such as the CAG goes to EPA instead of individual owners or vice versa?

A-3. Neither at this point in the process but, afterwards when stakeholders come together it is beneficial. Future uses of the Site is a priority of the head agency. Relationships from both sides of the fence can work together on future uses of the Site. There are a lot of people at EPA who have their eyes on the BoRit Site.

C-1. The Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) Study that is currently underway in Ambler should be considered in the mix.

Observer Comments.

Observers were given a chance to ask questions or make comments. There were no Observer questions or comments.

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Environmental Justice Presentation.

EPA Environmental Justice Coordinator, Reggie Harris and PADEP Representative Alice Wright introduced themselves to the CAG. Mr. Harris began his presentation by explaining the importance of generating a meaningful dialogue to help him understand the needs of the community. Mr. Harris noted that he had previously worked with a number of people at the meeting including EPA representatives, several CAG Members, and fellow toxicologist Dr. Ted Emmett. He explained how environmental justice is a complex topic and the process of having a meaningful dialogue will help everyone understand the various aspects of the subject and what it can do to help the community. The EPA's EJ Program works stakeholders to make sure each is treated appropriately and fairly and no negative impacts are left on the surrounding community. This is accomplished through environmental research, tools, and policies used to assist communities.

Mr. Harris then asked the CAG to tell him what environmental justice issues and concerns they had so he could respond appropriately. Member comments included:

- The area surrounding the Site is a minority community that desperately needs revitalization. There are kids selling drugs on the corner and the neighborhood is neglected. It has become a low income and depressed area that needs something that is safe for the children and positive for the community. West Ambler needs something of value that it can get behind.

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- West Ambler currently has an American Legion Post and two small, dangerously located and sparsely lit pocket parks. The fenced-off site has no value and is a big negative to the community. West Ambler and South Ambler need something that is of value to the community and not just something built for profit.
- The area of West Ambler is central to the Wissahickon School District and the surrounding communities. As Ambler is being revitalized, why cant West Ambler be too? The most important factor in the current situation is that the asbestos contamination is the reason that West Ambler and South Ambler are low-income, depressed communities. The area has been impacted by the realization of the environmental and health hazards.
- West Ambler, like the rest of Ambler, was once a solid Italian blue collar working community. With the awareness of the asbestos hazards, property values declined. The community then turned largely African American. It should be acknowledged that the area is in danger of slipping down even further.
- The number one reason why West Ambler is not a vibrant, vital community is because of the of the presence of asbestos. The first step in revitalizing the area is getting rid of the asbestos.
- If we are discussing environmental justice for everyone, then we have to look at South Ambler too.
- The first step is making the community believe that EPA and all the other agencies can and will help.
- Making the area more desirable also includes improving the streets, lighting and providing amenities that would serve as a catalyst to revitalization. Once an area gets cleaned up and fixed up, it takes on a new atmosphere.
- The residents of West Ambler are mostly renters. The property owners should be required to keep up their rental properties. West Ambler needs more help from the Township in enforcing building codes. All the surrounding areas also have nice parks, but West Ambler doesn't have anything like them.
- The mini-playground and courts in West Ambler are constantly vandalized. Many grants have been applied for in the past. The Township is committed to supporting West Ambler in everyway it can.

After hearing these concerns, Mr. Harris said that all the contributions were important to getting to the heart of the issues. He then gave a brief history of the environmental justice movement and how EPA is recognizing it.

- In Warren County, North Carolina, PCB's from all over the state were dumped in one minority community. The community came together and said it was not fair to have the burden and hazards in their backyard while everyone else did not.

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- The Sierra Club and other organizations got involved and supported the community in demonstrating that they were being done a great injustice by being the dumping ground for the entire state.
- Following the Warren County situation, the United Church of Christ did a study in the early 1980's. It found many contaminated dumps/sites were located in communities of color.

Mr. Harris stated that, Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving grants are available to help communities. A variety of stakeholders can work together with the Environmental Justice Program to find solutions that greatly aid their communities.

DEP Representative, Alice Wright commented that when a community has been neglected, they get used to going without. Some successes are needed to change people's outlook, which is based on the treatment they have been receiving for a long time. Ms. Wright explained that the DEP cannot help with streets, lights and other infrastructure. She said the Township would have to address those matters and they should be doing more.

TASC representative, Mike Lythcott suggested that Flo Wise needed help in motivating her community. He pointed out that the property values would go back up over time once the Site was remediated. A CAG Member suggested a brainstorming session, at a future CAG meeting, was needed to help Ms. Wise and West Ambler.

An Observer commented that it is typical to have to deal with social issues when addressing problems in communities involving hazardous waste. He suggested that the CAG become engaged in the community in any way possible because these problems are intertwined and similar to those of many other communities facing the same obstacles. In order to treat asbestos, other problems must be solved as well.

Discussion on CAG Response to NPL Proposal.

Co-Chair Fred Conner reminded everyone that the deadline for submitting a formal response to the NPL proposal was November 3, 2008. Consensus on the CAG's response will have to be done by email. Mr. Conner asked anyone interested in helping draft the document to stay behind after the meeting concluded.

Comments made by Members before the meeting ended included:

- C-1. The Co-chairs and Workgroup leaders will develop the proposed agenda for November.
- C-2. Observers that are part of Workgroups should be included on the addresses spreadsheet.
- C-3. CAG Members are invited to West Ambler Civic Association meetings.
- C-4. During the public comment period on NPL listing, individuals should write letters too.
- C-5. Anyone objecting to the endorsement of the HERS response document should email Fred Conner or Bob Adams.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30.