

**BoRit Asbestos Super-fund Site Community Advisory Group**  
**Ambler / Upper Dublin / Whitpain, Pennsylvania**

**Date:** Wednesday, August 3, 2011  
**Location:** Upper Dublin Township Building, 801 Loch Alsh Ave. Fort Washington, Pa 19002  
**Time:** 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm  
**Attended by:** See attached<sup>1</sup>

**6:30 p.m. Welcome & Announcements**

- **Introductions:** None
- **Review Agenda**
- **July Minutes:** Approved
- **Announcements:** None

**6:40 p.m. Cancer Registry: Barbara Allerton (PA Department of Health):**

The PA Department of Health cooperates with ASTDR. They jointly provided two health consultations in 2009, and are involved with on-going evaluation of EPA's sampling data, which so far, indicates there is no current exposure representing a level of public health concern, but that there is the potential for exposure under increased activity (for example, trespassing).

Barbara reported on work with Dr. Bogdan to expand the time frame of information (1992-2008) from the national cancer registry data relative to mesothelioma and lung and bronchus cancers in the Ambler, Blue Bell and Ft. Washington zip codes. Mesothelioma is the cancer that does not occur without asbestos exposure. Mesothelioma rates in Ambler were generally 3.1 times higher than expected (as compared to Pennsylvania rates); rates for women were 4.5 times higher, and rates for men were 2.7 times higher. However, both lung and bronchus cancers were lower than expected! Nevertheless, Ambler, as a cancer cluster, is unique in the state.

Ms. Allerton clarified that the national registry data reflects past exposure; typically the asbestos takes 30 years to emerge into a diagnosis. Also, the registry lists people with respect to where they live at the time of diagnosis. Population mobility make the data give a partial picture. She affirmed that the BoRit site is not making us sick now.

Since asbestos exposure is considered to be an occupational exposure, it is interesting that a higher incidence of mesothelioma showed up in women. Diagnosis of family members of workers in the industry is common in other places.

Early in 2012 there will be a public assessment report of recently collected EPA data.

The power point slide presentation will be posted on the [www.BoRitCAG.org](http://www.BoRitCAG.org) website.

**Dr. Ted Emmett:** Cannot predict when the U. Penn study will be completed –hope in 1-2 years. Trying to reconstruct who was here in the past and what happened to them – using profiles based on the 1930 census through the 1970 census. PA Health Dept. is also looking at historical exposures without duplicating Dr. Emmett's study.

Sharon McCormick pointed out that Pennsylvania ranks as the third highest state in the US in mesothelioma deaths; yet most counties reported low numbers. With 9 large asbestos facilities in Montgomery County, we would expect to see higher levels than the rest of the state. Sharon also

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<sup>1</sup> No attendance list yet to hand

noted that the document states that the cancer increases seen within the community are contributed to the asbestos manufacturing of the past and not to the waste piles. She noted that current air tests documented by EPA show asbestos was present in the community as recent as 2007, and in elevated levels, enough to qualify the site as a Superfund site.

Peter Lowry commented that the statistical significance of the cancer registry report was VERY significant. He noted trends – that during the 1970's, OSHA and EPA regulations were making things safer, plants were closing out of difficulty in meeting the standards. By 1992-2008 the cancer incidences data flattens out with generally 1-2 new reported cases per year (usually in the ages of 70-75 years old) with one spike in 1996 with 6 cases. We would expect the numbers to decline even further, if the cancers are merely occupationally related. Dr, Emmet noted that a predicted peak in Australia has not manifested.

Barbara Allerton was thanked.

### **Topic: Expansion of CAG Scope**

Ted has written language that has circulated only within the ad hoc committee proposing the wording change in our “bylaws” if we voted to change our CAG Area of Concern. Ted read it to the group. Co-chairs clarified that we would not vote tonight. The wording needs to be distributed to the whole CAG for review. Eileen clarified this would become the new second paragraph in our mission statement.

Sharon noted that EPA's historical solution with asbestos sites was a “cap”; in one case, 2,000 properties were assigned deed restrictions that will dampen their property resale. Sharon is concerned that expanding the scope may result in this undesirable impact on local private property. She predicted expanding the scope to look for more asbestos would not end up well for Ambler and Upper Dublin community. She recommended that property owners clean up their own properties, to avoid the agency restricting their deeds.

Susan Curry expressed that Ted's language was very vague – and preferred something more specific to include the manufacturing sites on West Maple.

Ted's language is “permissive but not obligatory”. It enables us, but doesn't direct us or tie us to anything.

Peter Lowry added that the right to search for truth implies a duty – and that we should encourage EPA to fully search before closing the RI phase – to search outside the sandbox – investigating chemicals, not just asbestos. Peter also asked EPA to provide the CAG with its standards for cleanup of asbestos contamination.

Sharon added that other asbestos sites have the same chemicals, and promoted the idea of restricting our scope to the manufacturing and dumping sites.

Co-chairs declared we would decide the issue at the next CAG meeting (in October). A straw poll of members present agreed to vote next meeting.

### **Work group reports:**

**Rules committee:** did not meet. Changing to a bi-monthly meeting schedule was adopted by the CAG at the last meeting and was not a bylaws issue. October was the annual meeting to vote on Co-chairs. Nominations go to all Rules committee members. The Rules committee vets the nominees to see if they are willing to serve.

**RR&M group:** did not meet

**Future Uses group:** did not meet

**Community Awareness Group:**

- An invitation for more people to join the group was extended.
- Information that Gordon requested from the Ambler Water Department has been posted on their website.
- Agency representatives were individually queried in the meeting to learn if the [www.BoRitCAG.org](http://www.BoRitCAG.org) link could be posted on their own website [Action Item 15].
- A poster with a pocket to hold the CAG business cards will be placed in local public places.
- The idea of road signs was eliminated.
- We will create a message for the Ambler Savings Bank flashing sign
- We will prepare an August press release about current EPA work and current issues with which the CAG is grappling, such as CAG considering expanding scope; Phase V started, more dirt capping, removal of all trees Phase II RI/FS data web posting; and next meeting agenda items.

**HERS group:** Met by phone June 27, as they do on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays. They discussed the feedback CAG members shared with them on the EPA Risk Assessment process (posted on the CAG website). The Risk Assessment process starts after the Remedial Investigation (RI) is completed. Also, the new Public Health Assessment is likely to be available in early 2012. Additionally, a number of changes to how documents are labelled under the Health tab on the CAG website will be suggested by HERS to the Community Awareness group.

**Action Items:**

Action Item 108: **A \$50,000 TAG grant** to hire an independent expert is available, if there is a non-profit who will submit the request. Eric Cheung offered to verify if Clean Air Council would be the sponsoring NPO.

Action Item 115: **Soil Cap Failures:** Someone from EPA commented that caps are designed to be safe for at least 30 years. There is a five year inspection and maintenance plan. The soil covering on the Wissahickon Park was not a formal cap. EPA defers to whatever state laws and design guidelines are in place. We asked for a copy of the state regulations.

Action Item 123: **Frequency of CAG meetings:** will move to the On-going section of the action items list.

Action Item 128: **Total ACM Volume:**

Co-chairs asked EPA for their best up-to-date estimate of the total ACM volume in all three BoRit parcels. Kris Matzko (?) replied that the CAG would have that estimate when the RI report is published, not beforehand, and would only include the ACM on the pile and the park, it will not estimate volume of ACM in the reservoir. Trish indicated the report would be available in roughly a year. Normally, a community has a 30-day period to comment on the ROD report. If the CAG sends a formal letter requesting an extension of the public comment period, it will most likely be granted.

An EPA estimate of 250,000 cubic yards was given at the June 2011 CAG meeting.

Action Item 48: **RIFS Milestones Poster:** Vance mentioned on-going progress on a chart showing the RIFS process.

Action Item 113: **Cancer Registry:** Retire

Action Item 39: **Local Flooding:** Retire

NEXT MEETING: October 5, 2011