

To: - Citizen Task Force
From: Melinda Holland, Clean Sites
Subject: Summary of December 3, 1997, Meeting
Date: December 22, 1997

Next Meeting:

The next Citizen Task Force (CTF) meeting will be on:

Date: Wednesday, January 7, 1998
Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Location: Ashford Office Complex
9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY

If you have questions or comments regarding the upcoming meeting or about this summary, please contact Melinda Holland at (864) 457-4202, or Tom Attridge at (716) 942-2453.

CTF Attendees:

Attending were: Pete Scherer, Joe Patti, Ray Vaughan, Tim Siepel, Lou Brehm (for Rich Tobe), Bill King, Nevella McNeil, Tom Rowland, Blake Reeves, Elaine Belt, Paul Piciulo, Murray Regan, Eric Wohlers, Pete Cooney, and Warren Schmidt. Not attending were: Lana Rosler, John Pfeffer, Larry Smith and Rich Tobe.

Regulatory Agency Attendees:

Jack Krajewski, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
Jack Parrott, Tim Johnson, Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

December 3 Meeting Summary:

Melinda Holland began the meeting by reviewing administrative issues and the agenda. There were no corrections to the summary of the last meeting. The December 3 meeting focused on CTF discussion of Waste Management Area (WMA) 1, the Main Plant Process Building. The CTF members discussed numerous issues and questions about WMA 1, but did not come to agreement on a preferred approach for managing the Main Plant Area. The main points of CTF member discussions are summarized below without attribution, and answers provided by site personnel are attributed to the organization responding.

Concerns were raised about the fact that some cells are still contaminated and the small cells may be hard to access for disposal purposes. In response to a question, DOE noted that the utilities supporting the site are primarily located in a portion of the plant that could be left in place while other parts are dismantled. It was recommended that the Main Plant should be one of the last facilities to be taken down. In response to a question about the cost/benefit analysis report, a DOE representative responded that the Main Plant is ranked sixth among waste management areas for baseline hazard (risk) and thus is proposed for a later round of closures after the areas that pose a greater short-term risk are dealt with.

The discussion then focused on the impacts of WMA 1 closure alternatives on the ability to remediate the North Plateau Groundwater Plume. Some members favored removal of the Main Plant Building to allow removal of the groundwater plume contamination under the building. Concern was raised over whether the plume contained radioisotopes other than Strontium and Cesium that pose significant long-term risks. A DOE contractor stated that they felt the best approach for the plume would be to put a slurry wall around the Main Plant and the existing pocket of material that is the source of the plume, pump and treat the leading edge of the plume to contain it, then allow the material to decay. Within 300 years the radionuclides of concern would be gone. The presence of contaminants in the vadose (soil area above the groundwater) zone was raised as a concern along with the possible presence of other longer-lived radionuclides other than Strontium. Site personnel agreed to provide the CTF with information on the radionuclides at the source of the plume. A slurry wall to contain the source material was viewed as a good interim solution by many CTF members, but concern still exists over a long-term solution.

The B&P railroad is going to announce that they are abandoning the section of railroad past the WVDP. DOE is considering support for keeping the rail line operational for the near future because shipping waste by rail eliminates or reduces the challenge of hauling waste by truck through many municipalities.

To follow up from the last Task Force meeting, a CTF member asked NYSERDA for more information on what is buried in the SDA. A NYSERDA representative responded by saying that all the available information has been made public. A new revision of the SDA Waste Characterization Report has been prepared. The records from the 1960s and 70s were not as detailed as today's records but they did have good information on waste volume because that was the basis for the fees charged. Information on the types of waste streams sent to the SDA was also analyzed. Conservative estimates were used and no credit was taken for the containment which might result from waste containers. The best estimates possible are being made and the State feels they now have a good inventory. If the SDA was exhumed, an estimate can be made of the volume of waste but the amount and level of contamination of the backfill used in the SDA is unknown. The size, shape, and condition of waste containers is also not well known. Some packages were very large. It may be difficult to exhume these wastes remotely. The SDA contains a lot of material from power plants which is highly contaminated by short half-life substances which will degrade over the next 100 years. While much of the waste may be safe

- SDA if we wait 100 years.
- Undecided on recommendation; too many things unknown - need more information; grouted rubble approach is too difficult to retrieve later; prefer retrievable approach; need to decontaminate the hot cells; how clean is an issue; Alternative 2 approach seems very difficult.
- Do not like Alternative 3 approaches but not sure about Alternative 2; favor retrievable approach; hauling it away is not an option because it gives the problem to someone else and is not cost effective; Alternative 4 does not seem productive; knows what doesn't want done with the plant but not sure what does want; concern about building beams, perhaps could they be sealed by concrete from below, or perhaps the slurry wall will take care of it; want more information on beams and plume.
- No recommendation yet; need to pay attention to the health and safety impacts to the public and workers for each alternative; need to look at economics of local community; need to address the plume.
- Premature to make a decision at this time, need to do comparisons of cost and benefits; handle this unit later after dealing with others; want to see what newer performance data is showing (so far we are looking at draft EIS data).
- Feel should aim towards dismantling the building but cost is an issue; clean it out, install slurry wall, then leave it in place and monitor over short term because that may be more practical; don't do anything to lock us in.
- Believe the best approach for the plume is the accelerated pump and treat proposal; need more information on slurry walls; as soon as the canisters are gone the building should be dismantled and put in containers in a retrievable form; the visual appearance of this site is a consideration, concerned about the image of a shut down plant in Ashford; concerned about tax status and failure of future politicians to continue payment in lieu of taxes; concern over use of temporary solution; doesn't want to ship our problem to others but leaving our problem here for our children shouldn't be done either; ultimately the material should be shipped to a better site when one or more are found.

Next, the CTF discussed next steps and potential topics for the next meeting. A CTF member stated that he didn't want to go into too many more waste management areas if this isn't moving in some useful direction. A member requested feedback from the site and information on availability of funding. He is concerned that we will develop a recommendation to containerize and then be told that the money is not there to do it. A member countered that they should move forward with recommendations without considering money as they have been told not to worry about the money and have requested information on funding but have not gotten answers from the site. Another stated that the CTF role is to be educated and to educate the public and they could help bring common sense into the process. Yet another reminded the group that governments have to fight to get funding, it doesn't just appear. Find a solution the CTF feels is right and implement it now because it will cost more if you postpone the cleanup until later, was the recommendation of another member.