

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
BROOKLYN-QUEENS AQUIFER FEASIBILITY STUDY

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING: December 2, 2004

MINUTES

The 24th meeting of the Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer (BQA) Feasibility Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on Thursday, December 2, 2004 at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center. (See Attachment A for Attendance List.)

Helen Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus & Associates (HNA), opened the meeting by asking for comments on the Minutes of the November 4th meeting. There were no comments, and the Minutes were adopted unanimously. She then facilitated a discussion of follow-up items from that meeting:

- The groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of clean-up at the West Side Corporation (WSC) site was held on November 22nd. Ms. Neuhaus reported a good turnout and thanked those CAC members who attended. She noted that Acting Commissioner David Tweedy, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and Deputy Commissioner Carl Johnson, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), were in attendance, as well as several elected officials, community representatives and members of the media.
- Ms. Neuhaus announced that a Public Meeting to discuss the soil remediation work at the WSC site is scheduled for December 13th. After noting that 1,000+ flyers were sent out to residents, elected officials and Community Board (CB) #12, she asked CAC members for help in distributing additional flyers throughout their neighborhood. Ms. Neuhaus added that specific plans for the Public Meeting will be discussed as a separate agenda item later in the meeting.
- Dave Chiusano, DEC, sent the WSC mailing list to HNA for integration into the current BQA mailing list.
- The project team is collaborating on a “Frequently Asked Questions” document regarding the WSC site. This document will be distributed at the December 13th Public Meeting.
- As requested at the November 4th CAC meeting, the Draft Community Protection Plan (CPP) for the WSC site clean-up will be distributed to the CAC and its Scientific Review Panel (SRP) for review. Ms. Neuhaus noted that the Health and Safety Plan (HASP), which was also requested, is a lengthy, technical document focused mostly on the safety of workers at the site. Copies of the HASP will be distributed to the SRP and available at the December 13th Public Meeting. In addition, it will be forwarded to CAC members, upon request. Mr. Chiusano indicated that both documents will be placed in the project repository (Queens Borough Public Library). Deputy Commissioner Doug Greeley, DEP, recommended that they also be sent to CB #12, while Sara Pecker, DEP, suggested that the documents be posted on the BQA website.
- Mr. Chiusano reported that the schedule for upcoming work at the WSC site has been sent to Nicole Brown, Malcolm Pirnie, for integration into the overall BQA project schedules. In

Ms. Brown's absence, Don Cohen, Malcolm Pirnie, indicated that the schedules will be updated shortly for distribution to the CAC.

- Commissioner Greeley discussed plans for two upcoming sewer improvement projects in Southeast Queens. Contract #HWQ1161 involves the construction of a 48" water main, which will improve the distribution of water, including any future supply from Station 6. It will also address current sewer problems in the area. Contract #HWQ1156 will resolve the long-standing flooding problem frequently cited by CB #12 District Manager Yvonne Reddick. Commissioner Greeley explained that the Department continues to connect its surface and groundwater systems in order to increase reliability of the overall water supply system.

Project Update

West Side Corporation

Mr. Chiusano reported that the contract for soil clean-up activities at the WSC site was approved by the New York State Attorney General's Office on November 16th and is currently under review by the New York State Comptroller's Office. The contract is expected to be awarded shortly. He emphasized that no field work would begin prior to the December 13th Public Meeting.

Related questions and issues are summarized below:

- In response to a question from Linda Hazel, Ms. Neuhaus emphasized that the Electrical Resistance Heating (ERH) and Soil Vapor Extraction (SVE) technologies will involve in-place remediation, greatly reducing the amount of soil to be transported through the community. It was also noted that the CPP details the truck routes for the soil transport vehicles, which will use 180th Street and Liberty Avenue to reach the Van Wyck Expressway.
- Jeff Diggs inquired about the number of personnel that will be working at the site. Jon Sundquist, URS Corporation, responded that the greatest number of workers (maximum of 20) will be on site during the initial two months of work when the probes are being installed. Fewer than five workers will be on site once the ERH system is in operation. Work will take place on weekdays, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. The daily work schedule will be coordinated with the Atlantic Bus Company's schedule. Mr. Chiusano noted that while phone numbers for the site trailers are not yet available, they will be posted at the site as soon as the phones are installed. In response to a follow-up question from Lillie Farrell, DEP, he explained that workers will park at DEP's Station 24 property, where the office trailers will also be located.
- In response to an inquiry from Earl Roberts, the project team emphasized that work at the site will not affect the school buses or passengers in any way.
- Mr. Chiusano noted that in addition to the bus company's current security staff, the contractor will hire 24-hour security personnel.
- Mr. Chiusano reiterated that once the ERH system is in full operation, a tour of the site will be arranged for CAC and SRP members.
- In response to a question from Debora Hunte, it was emphasized that the site work will not affect the quality of the drinking water, which is drawn from the upstate reservoir system.

Station 24

Mr. Cohen announced that design of the groundwater treatment system is complete and is currently being reviewed by DEP. The contract and bidding process will begin upon final approval by DEP. He noted that in continuing to address street de-mapping issues, the project team has met with the New York City Department of City Planning, the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals, and DEP's Office of Environmental Planning and Assessment. Applications and other documents are being prepared, as required. Station 24 work remains on schedule, allowing adequate time for soil remediation at the WSC site before the start of pumping at Station 24.

Station 6

Mr. Cohen reported that the conceptual design for Station 6 is about 10% complete. A conceptual design report describing the architecture, treatment process and construction specifications is being prepared for submission to DEP this month. The conceptual design will not progress beyond this level until after the Value Engineering (VE) workshop (scheduled for January 2005), to allow for consideration of any significant comments or changes suggested by the VE team.

Mr. Cohen indicated that the project team held a workshop to consider acquiring a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for Station 6. LEED ratings -- which fall under the categories of Platinum, Gold, Silver and Certified -- are based on sustainable design (use of energy-efficient power and Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems, use of recyclable building materials, low maintenance levels, etc.). He explained that the current design of Station 6 appears to be eligible for the Silver Category, as it incorporates several essential components, including high efficiency lighting and the use of recycled water for the HVAC system.

Ms. Neuhaus indicated that she will be working with New York City Councilman Leroy Comrie to arrange for a meeting for residents to view and comment on the Station 6 architectural model. Councilman Comrie has expressed interest in co-sponsoring the meeting with DEP. She consulted the CAC regarding a preferable time for this meeting. CAC members commented that a weeknight meeting is likely to generate a better turnout than a Saturday morning meeting. In response to Ms. Hunte's caution that residents may use the meeting as a forum to complain about local street flooding issues (particularly in the vicinity of 110th Avenue and 164th Street), Commissioner Greeley reiterated that the trunk main project on 110th Avenue will help alleviate that situation. Tracey Bowes added that the meeting can still be productive if DEP is able to quickly address tangential concerns while steering the conversation back to the project.

Relief Sewer

Referring to a map of the current sewer system, Commissioner Greeley provided an update on the status of the new relief sewer, which will carry the effluent from the new Station 6 plant directly to the treatment plant. He explained that drainage plans completed as part of an earlier project are being used by DEP for design of the new sewer, which will service a 7,300 acre drainage area.

By way of background, Commissioner Greeley described the combined sanitary and storm sewer system in Southeast Queens, which overflows into Thurston Basin and eventually out to Jamaica Bay during periods of heavy rain. He explained that plans for the relief sewer are consistent with DEP's objective of reducing the number of combined sewers throughout the City, in order to minimize the overflow of sewage into coastal waters.

Focusing on details of the relief sewer, Commissioner Greeley noted that design work, to date, has included examination of local terrain, identification of existing utility locations, and computer modelling to develop a proposed route. An apparently viable route will generally run south from Station 6 to the Jamaica WPCP, parallel to Guy R. Brewer Boulevard. In a final comment, Commissioner Greeley indicated that installation of the relief sewer will have the added benefit of facilitating related sewer projects in Jamaica and Cambria Heights.

Recap of November 17th Pre-Application Meeting with Art Commission

Mr. Cohen reported that the Art Commission responded favorably to the presentation of the Station 6 architectural model and praised the project team for the building concept and its extensive community outreach program. He added that the Commission did request more attention to design of the back wall of the building, which was viewed as stark and bare. Although the project team explained that the rationale for the design of the back wall was to provide privacy and protect adjacent residents from light pollution, it was agreed that an alternative approach, incorporating artwork, landscaping or additional design features, will be developed. Ms. Neuhaus indicated that Councilman Comrie presented the Art Commission with a letter of support for the project. The Commission's request for a letter of support from CB #12 will be addressed following the meeting with area residents.

Ms. Hazel, who represented the CAC at the Art Commission meeting, commented on the brevity of the session and the large number of projects, citywide, that are overseen by the Commission. In response to its critique of the model, she remarked that the current design for Station 6, even with the bare back wall, is a vast improvement over the structure that is presently on the site.

In response to the Art Commission's suggestion that the project consider a Percent for Art program, Commissioner Greeley indicated that the project team plans to include this component. He explained that all city-owned capital construction projects that provide public services and are accessible to the community are eligible for participation in the program, which allocates 1% of a project's overall cost to artwork. Commissioner Greeley noted that the community decides what kind of public art, if any, will be displayed, and suggested that the CAC begin to think about appropriate artwork for the facility. In addition to the back wall, public art could be located in the entrance plaza, inside the community space or on the interior walls.

During the discussion that followed, several ideas were raised regarding the Percent for Art program:

- Commissioner Greeley suggested that it may be appropriate to contact York College as an additional resource for ideas about potential artwork.
- Ms. Hazel suggested a design competition for local students or artists to provide the artwork for the back wall mural. She added that collections of local artwork, displayed inside the building, could change periodically to reflect the dynamic relationship between the community and the facility. If a design competition is pursued, Ms. Neuhaus recommended that the CAC begin by defining specific parameters.
- Ms. Hunte encouraged the involvement of local high school and college students.
- Ms. Pecker raised the idea of designing a piece to commemorate the late Lewis Latimer, an African-American inventor and Queens resident, who is credited with inventing the water closet for railroad cars.

- Ms. Bowes suggested that CAC members research local artists and propose their ideas at future CAC meetings.

Mr. Cohen reminded everyone that construction of Station 6 is still two to three years away. Ms. Neuhaus emphasized that this conversation is only the beginning and that ideas will evolve as the architectural design is further developed. Agreeing with a suggestion made by Mr. Roberts, she noted that the topic will be discussed at the upcoming meeting with residents in the vicinity of Station 6.

December 13th Public Meeting

Mr. Chiusano emphasized that the meeting presentation will be kept simple, focusing on many of the issues raised by the CAC at its November 4th meeting. He noted that his group has been coordinating very closely with Malcolm Pirnie and HNA to develop the appropriate presentations, display boards and handouts for the meeting.

Ms. Neuhaus reminded the group that the Open House will begin at 6:30 p.m., with the presentation starting at 7:00 p.m. She reviewed the draft agenda for the Public Meeting, noting that Ms. Hazel will open the meeting on behalf of the CAC. The presentation will detail the history of the site and the need for remediation; explain how the site will be cleaned up; introduce the team that will be performing the work; and describe the overall project timeline. Responding to concerns that residents may be overwhelmed by excessive information, she assured the group that the technical presentations will be thorough, but simple and brief, to allow ample time for questions and discussion.

Ms. Neuhaus indicated that a separate public meeting will be held to discuss the vapor intrusion study and that future meetings will provide updates on the status of work at the WSC site.

A summary of questions and comments is provided below:

- Ms. Farrell suggested that a CAC member explain the group's role and encourage residents to attend CAC meetings. Everyone agreed, and it was decided that Ms. Hazel will provide this information before introducing the members of the CAC and SRP.
- In response to a question, the project team indicated that the Open House will feature presentation boards, including a diagram of the ERH process, an aerial photograph of the site, a map highlighting the source areas, and a location map of the WSC site in relation to the surrounding neighborhood.
- It was suggested, and agreed, that information on case studies of safe and successful use of ERH and SVE systems in residential communities be available at the meeting.
- Ms. Hazel cited a fact sheet and video from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which explains remediation techniques in simple terms. She suggested that these materials, as well as an outside reading list, serve as supplemental resources for concerned residents.
- In response to comments regarding the BQA project website, Ms. Neuhaus noted that while the site does not have an FAQ section, WSC documents, including the FAQs, will be posted online.
- In response to Ms. Hunte's concern that people will leave the meeting early if the presentation is too long, the project team reiterated that the presentations will be kept short to allow ample time for questions and discussion.

New Business

- Mr. Cohen announced that the BQA project has received the prestigious Diamond Award for Engineering Excellence from the New York chapter of the American Council of Engineering Companies. It is also one of five winning projects selected by the New York chapter to advance to the national competition.

Mr. Cohen explained that the project's selection was based on many factors, including design of the water treatment process at Station 6, remediation of the WSC site, improvement of the sewer system and the public outreach program. He agreed to bring a copy of the project submission to the next CAC meeting.

- Ms. Hazel mentioned that she will be attending a conference this month on issues related to lead in drinking water. She noted that she will bring back educational materials for the CAC's review.
- On behalf of the Brinkerhoff Action Association, Irving Hicks expressed the neighborhood's appreciation for the BQA project. He also invited everyone to the group's annual Christmas party on December 6th at 7:00 p.m. at St. Benedict the Moor Church.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 6, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center, 188-11 Hillside Avenue, Jamaica Estates.

Follow-Up List

1. Provide HASP, CPP and Soil Gas Survey Sampling Work Plan to SRP. Provide CPP to CAC and forward HASP and CPP to CB #12. Responsibility: Jon Sundquist, URS; HNA.
2. Bring a copy of the BQA project design submission for the American Council of Engineering Companies Engineering Excellence Award to the next CAC meeting. Responsibility: Don Cohen, Malcolm Pirnie.
3. Schedule community meeting to discuss Station 6 architectural design and artwork. Responsibility: DEP, Malcolm Pirnie, HNA.
4. Obtain letter of support from CB #12 regarding Station 6 architectural design for submission to the Art Commission. Responsibility: HNA.
5. Expand BQA project web site to include WSC information as it becomes available. Responsibility: DEC, DEP, HNA.
6. Provide examples of where ERH technology has been used in residential areas. Responsibility: Dave Chiusano, DEC; Jon Sundquist, URS.
7. Schedule meetings with New York Police Department and New York City Fire Department to discuss safety plans and upcoming construction activities at WSC. Coordinate with Yvonne Reddick. Responsibility: Dave Chiusano, DEC; DEP, HNA.
8. Incorporate DEC's WSC soil remediation schedule into overall BQA project schedules. Responsibility: Nicole Brown, Malcolm Pirnie.
9. Schedule visit(s) to WSC site once clean-up is underway. Responsibility: DEP, DEC, Malcolm Pirnie, HNA.

Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer Feasibility Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, December 2, 2004

Attendance List

CAC Members/Alternates

Linda Caleb Hazel
A Better Day Inc./St. Benedict The Moor/
St. Bonaventure

Tracey Bowes
Community Board #12

Jeff Diggs
Councilman Leroy Comrie

Richard Hellenbrecht
Community Board #13

Irving Hicks
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Sarah Hicks
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Debora Hunte
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Earl Roberts
113th Precinct Council

Gurpal Singh
Senator Malcolm A. Smith

SRP Members

Gilbert Hanson
State University of New York
at Stony Brook

Guests

Amira Farrell
Resident

Project Team

Dave Chiusano
New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation

Don Cohen
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Lillie Farrell
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Doug Greeley
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Natasha Harper
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Helen Neuhaus
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Sara Pecker
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Jon Sundquist
URS Corporation

Andrea Wong
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Anita Wright
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Bill Yulinsky
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection