

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

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING: February 6, 2003

MINUTES

The ninth meeting of the Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer (BQA) Feasibility Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on Thursday, February 6, 2003 at Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center. (Attendance list attached.)

Deputy Commissioner Douglas Greeley, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), opened the meeting by remembering the seven astronauts killed in last week's space shuttle Columbia disaster. After noting that the shuttle crew included men and women of different races, ethnicities and backgrounds, all serving science, he asked the CAC to observe a moment of silence. Helen Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc. (HNA), then made two announcements: 1) welcoming back Denise Woodin, HNA, who recently returned from China where she adopted a baby; and 2) congratulating Manuel Caughman on being selected for the Citizens Committee for New York City's Osborn Elliott Community Leadership Award. Mr. Caughman will receive this prestigious award on behalf of the Brinkerhoff Action Association at a ceremony at the Waldorf Astoria next week.

Following adoption of the Minutes of the January 9th CAC meeting without changes, Ms. Neuhaus facilitated a brief discussion of responses to issues and concerns raised at that meeting. These included the following:

- Several documents and other information requested by the CAC and the Scientific Review Panel (SRP) have been provided. Copies of a letter from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to Assemblyman William Scarborough describing soil, groundwater and soil vapor testing near the West Side Corporation (WSC) and a map showing the locations of Station 24 monitoring wells were available at the sign-in table. Ms. Neuhaus encouraged CAC members to contact her if there is anything in the materials they want the SRP to review.
- Ms. Neuhaus reported that filming of the Station 6 Pilot Plant video is moving along; a few more interviews have yet to be conducted. Observing that several CAC members expressed an interest in educational programs for the community, she added that the Pilot Plant tours with schoolchildren, one of which was filmed, were particularly exciting. Ms. Neuhaus commended Nicole Brown and Karim Naraghi, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. for their skills as "natural teachers" and noted that an added benefit of the project might be to encourage kids to become scientists. Ms. Neuhaus further stated that discussions are continuing with School District 29 regarding educational programs related to the BQA Study.

Project Update

Ms. Brown announced that the Pilot Plant would close on February 10th, with work continuing until the last day. The building will once again be used by NYCDEP for temporary storage. She

reported that technical memoranda regarding test results are being prepared and will be ready for CAC and SRP review in March; a discussion of the findings will take place at the April CAC meeting.

Referring to the Electrical Resistance Heating (ERH) method of treatment at the WSC, Ms. Brown announced that the 90% Design Report is ready and will be sent to the SRP. She noted that the report consists of three bound volumes plus drawings. Since two of the volumes contain only contractual material, she suggested that one volume and the drawings be distributed. A motion was made, and adopted unanimously, requesting that these documents be forwarded to the CAC. A brief discussion followed regarding which SRP members to invite to the March meeting for a discussion of the report. Ms. Neuhaus stated that she would confer with the project team regarding this matter. In response to a question from Linda Hazel, Commissioner Greeley and Ms. Neuhaus reported that, according to NYSDEC, the design is scheduled to be completed in March with the bid going out this spring. Construction is projected to start in August.

At Station 24, groundwater pumped from the recovery well will be treated using Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) and discharged to the sewer system. In response to a question from Michael Turner, Commissioner Greeley noted that the GAC will be containerized; once the carbon is used, the spent container will be disposed of off-site. In response to a question from Mr. Caughman, Commissioner Greeley stated that most of the catch basin work has been completed and construction crews have been working on the sewers that will handle the discharge from Station 24. However, they have been slowed by the extremely cold weather. Ms. Brown indicated that the project team is very confident in both the ERH and GAC treatment methods.

New Business

Membership

Ms. Neuhaus stated that Kirk Dunbar, a former CAC member who was removed for non-attendance, asked for reinstatement following the last meeting. She explained that Mr. Dunbar missed several meetings due to illness, was present at last month's meeting and is in attendance tonight. In response to Ms. Neuhaus' invitation to address the committee, Mr. Dunbar declined, urging the committee to "just vote." He left the room while the Committee took the matter under advisement. After a brief discussion, Tracey Bowes called the question on the motion to reinstate Mr. Dunbar. The motion was defeated by a vote of: 0 in favor; 9 opposed; and 1 abstention.

A Look Ahead

Ms. Brown stated that the Pilot Plant has generated such good data and positive feedback that the project team has started to think ahead to the design of a demonstration plant. Because permitting for a new facility could take months or even years, the team has started a checklist in order to plan for the timely submission of all permit applications. Ms. Brown asked the CAC to start thinking conceptually about what it would like the plant to look like.

Bill Yulinsky, NYCDEP, explained that the buildings at the 110th Avenue end of the Station 6 property would be razed. A new plant will be built that will include all of the treatment equipment, storage of chemicals and supplies, a control room for the treatment and groundwater systems, offices, personnel parking and facilities. While space will be very limited, Mr.

Yulinsky indicated that NYCDEP also hopes to include a public viewing area. In response to a question from Kenneth Gill regarding the number of buildings, Mr. Yulinsky indicated that it would be one “good-sized” building of one or more stories. Responding to a question about the effect of a new plant on the surrounding neighborhood, Mr. Yulinsky observed that it would be much more attractive than the current property. He added that the new building might be a little higher and that there will be air stripping towers (approximately 50’). However, the towers can be designed to make them less obtrusive. In response to a question from Ms. Hazel, it was noted that the towers could not be constructed below ground due to the high water table. Commissioner Greeley added that the Department is looking into fencing alternatives that will provide the required security, but will be low visibility.

Debora Hunte asked if the construction work would create new jobs for the community. Commissioner Greeley replied that although NYCDEP is part of the civil service system, it is also self-funded and he thinks he can guarantee some jobs for local residents. In response, Jeff Diggs cautioned him to be realistic.

Mr. Diggs asked how much parking would be needed for public tours and staff parking. Mr. Yulinsky answered that due to security concerns, large tours would not be scheduled. The facility will support approximately 40-50 NYCDEP staff; some will be driving cars and small NYCDEP utility trucks. At times, there will be deliveries made by large tractor-trailer type trucks. Mr. Yulinsky indicated that the basic footprint of the site, as currently envisioned, includes a certain amount of parking. The 110th Avenue portion of the site is 83,000 square feet (approximately 2 acres).

Mr. Caughman noted that the area is zoned “R-4”, which prohibits structures from exceeding 35’ in height. Mr. Yulinsky explained that although the property was developed prior to the adoption of zoning laws, the project will still require review by the New York City Department of Buildings, the Board of Standards and Appeals, the Art Commission and the Community Board. In response to Yvonne Reddick’s question about community input during the process, Mr. Yulinsky asked the CAC to think about the question of whether the conceptual design should be brought to the Art Commission or the CAC first.

In closing, Ms. Neuhaus recommended that the CAC brainstorm about conceptual plans and come up with a “wish list” at its March meeting. She stated that the project team would bring additional information about the site and permitting procedures to help with the discussion. Looking ahead, Ms. Neuhaus suggested the following timetable for discussion/activities during the next few months:

- March CAC meeting: Discuss 90% design report with the SRP
Brainstorm regarding the demonstration plant design
- April CAC meeting: Discuss Pilot Plant technical memoranda with the SRP
- April/May: Presentation to Community Boards #12 and #13
- Late May/Early June: Public Forum

Other Business

Commissioner Greeley reminded CAC members that they had once expressed interest in touring NYCDEP’s water quality laboratories at Lefrak City. He asked if there was still interest and if

any particular day worked best for everyone. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that Commissioner Greeley would try to schedule a CAC tour for Thursday, March 13th. (Details to follow.)

Ms. Neuhaus closed the meeting by reading *In the Next Galaxy*, a poem by Ruth Stone, who recently won the National Book Award (at age 88!). The poem concludes:

“But in the next galaxy,
certain planets will have true
blue skies and drinking water.”

The next CAC meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 6, 2003 at 7 p.m.** at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center, 188-11 Hillside Avenue, Jamaica Estates.

Follow-Up Items

1. Provide copies of NYSDEC’s West Side Corporation (WSC) 90% Design Report to SRP members and the CAC. Responsibility: Malcolm Pirnie, Inc., HNA.
2. Schedule CAC tour of DEP’s water quality lab (tentative date – Thursday, March 13th). Responsibility: DEP, HNA.
3. Forward conceptual design memo for Station 24 treatment process to SRP members. Responsibility: Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.
4. Determine which SRP members should be present at the March and April CAC meetings and invite them to attend the meetings. Responsibility: CAC, HNA.
5. Identify need for SRP to address any specific issues raised in documents provided to CAC. Responsibility: CAC, HNA.
6. Identify any issues resulting from technical review of documents that SRP wishes to address. Responsibility: SRP, DEP, HNA, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.
7. Schedule presentation to Community Board #12 (tentatively April or May) to review results of Station 6 Pilot Plant. Responsibility: Yvonne Reddick, HNA.
8. Include dimensions of Station 6 property in Minutes of February 6th CAC meeting. Responsibility: Nicole Brown, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.; HNA.
9. Obtain information regarding Station 6 property layout (conceptual footprint of demonstration plant, equipment/facility needs, parking requirements, etc.); permitting checklist; Art Commission procedures; zoning rules and regulations; etc. for discussion at March CAC meeting. Responsibility: DEP, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.
10. Begin to consider “wish list” of elements (community use(s), landscaping, etc.) for inclusion in Station 6 demonstration plant. Responsibility: CAC.

Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer Feasibility Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 6, 2003

Attendance List

CAC Members/Alternates

Tracey Bowes
Community Board #12

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

Manuel Caughman
Community Board #12/Brinkerhoff Action
Association

Jeff Diggs
Councilman Leroy Comrie

Kenneth Gill
Addisleigh Park Civic Association

Irving Hicks
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Debora Hunte
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Yvonne Reddick
Community Board #12

Earl Roberts
113th Precinct Community Council

Michael Turner
Resident

Guests

Kirk Dunbar
Bifrost Arbeiter

Sarah Hicks
Resident

Maurice R. Muir
Community Board #12

Cardinal Sandiford
Community Board #12

Project Team

Nicole Brown
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Doug Greeley
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Mark Lanaghan
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Helen Neuhaus
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Denise Woodin
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Anita Wright
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Bill Yulinsky
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection