

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

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING: September 5, 2002

MINUTES

The fifth meeting of the Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer (BQA) Feasibility Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on Thursday, September 5, 2002 at Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center. (Attendance list attached.)

Old Business

Helen Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc. (HNA), opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and the announcement that Roman Kensy, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has retired from city service. Following adoption of the Minutes of the June 6th CAC meeting without changes, Ms. Neuhaus facilitated a discussion of responses to issues and concerns raised at that meeting. These included the following:

- In response to the Committee's request that CAC members who had missed three or more of the four meetings be contacted to determine their interest in continuing to serve, seven members were contacted with only two responding. Ola Hamilton resigned from the CAC due to other commitments. Gloria Black expressed interest in continuing to serve and was present at the September 5th meeting. The remaining individuals were removed from the Committee for non-attendance: Kirk Dunbar, Councilman Alan Jennings, Alan Pope, Senator Ada Smith, and Sadie Westbrook. Ms. Neuhaus noted that these individuals will remain on the project mailing list.
- In response to the Committee's request that CAC members not present at the June meeting be informed of, and invited to participate in, one of the Scientific Review Panel (SRP) subcommittees, Ms. Neuhaus stated that a memorandum had been sent. Dr. Black joined the Health Subcommittee; there were no other responses.
- In response to the Committee's request that attendance lists from previous meetings be reviewed to determine if there were any regular guests who might be appropriate additions to the CAC, Ms. Neuhaus noted that the only guest who had attended every meeting was Sarah Hicks, who already serves as an alternate for her husband, Irving Hicks. In addition, Ms. Neuhaus said that she had been contacted by Michael Turner, a guest at the June meeting, who expressed his interest in serving on the CAC. She then turned the floor over to Mr. Turner.
Mr. Turner stated that he works for the New York City Fire Department and is the Corresponding Secretary for the Addisleigh Park Civic Association. His home is near Station 24 and the contaminated plume from the West Side Corporation (WSC). Mr. Turner is concerned about the way things are going with the clean-up project and feels he could provide the Committee with new ideas.

A brief discussion followed, during which the CAC decided to consider Mr. Turner's membership request as a body of the whole, rather than by forming a membership subcommittee. Kenneth Gill and Manuel Caughman expressed support for Mr. Turner's request for membership. Mr. Turner was then asked to leave the room while the Committee voted unanimously to add him as the newest member of the CAC.

Update on West Side Corporation/Station 24

Don Cohen, Malcolm Pirnie, reported that a new recovery well has been installed at Station 24, and six monitoring well clusters have been installed at Station 24 and in the surrounding community to track the contaminated plume from WSC. (Each cluster has a shallow, an intermediate and a deep well.) Mr. Cohen stressed that installation of the recovery well is an important project milestone, because it is the first step in the clean-up process. In response to Linda Hazel's question about the placement of a well on St. Benedict the Moor's property, Mr. Cohen said that although he was unable to reach Father Paul, a suitable location was identified just outside church property. Responding to Ms. Hazel's further question about the location of the northern-most well, Mr. Cohen answered that it is on the Station 24 property, about 200 yards north of the WSC site. He indicated that the plume is moving south and added that two of the monitoring wells were placed inside the plume and two were placed outside, in order to bracket the plume. Referring to a recent news article, Ms. Hazel asked who had conducted soil sampling at Station 24, the adjacent property and the site of new homes under construction. Mr. Cohen replied that the testing was done by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Mr. Cohen then introduced Shive Mittal, DEC Project Manager for the WSC site clean-up. Mr. Mittal explained that the earlier pilot study that attempted to oxidize the perchloroethylene (PCE) through "chemical injection" produced poor results. DEC then tested two different thermal technologies: "steam injection" (heating the groundwater to boil off water and chemicals, which are collected in an above-ground vacuum) and "electrical resistance heating" (inserting resistance heaters in holes that are drilled in the ground). By heating the contaminated soil, vapors are extracted, captured and treated. In early June, DEC determined that electrical resistance heating is the most effective method. In response to a question from Mr. Turner, Mr. Mittal explained that the six-month design phase will be completed in March 2003. He added that a fact sheet is being prepared and will be ready for distribution to the community in approximately two months.

Answering a question from Mr. Gill about project funding, Mr. Mittal confirmed that the design phase, which is projected to cost \$500,000, is fully funded. However, the construction phase is dependent on funding through the State Superfund program, which has not been reauthorized by the legislature. Mr. Mittal expressed confidence that the program will be fully funded by next year. Dr. Black noted that, since this is an election year, this is the appropriate time to lobby the governor and state-level elected officials for reauthorization of the program. In response, Deputy Commissioner Doug Greeley, DEP, indicated that his agency's new commissioner, Christopher O. Ward, has been meeting with elected officials about the Station 6 Pilot Plant and the need for funding for WSC clean-up. He noted that the elected officials have been very responsive.

CAC members expressed frustration over the length of time being taken for design. In response, Mr. Mittal reiterated that the project was delayed by the poor results of the chemical oxidation tests. He added that several issues still need to be addressed, including the level of PCE in the soil, how much electrical current is needed, the type of building design and selecting a building contractor. The CAC requested several documents from DEC, including a projected work schedule; a monthly progress report; a summary of clean-up-related expenses to date (including the pilot tests and design costs); and a list of locations where the proposed remediation technology has been successfully used.

In response to Dr. Black's comment about the lack of coordination between agencies, Mr. Cohen explained the relationship between DEP and DEC with regard to the WSC clean-up. He indicated that because Superfund funding is not available for construction at this time, DEP has sent a letter to the New York City Law Department requesting that the city's Economic Development Corporation take over the WSC site for non-payment of back taxes. After noting that the city has more flexible funding options for cleaning up the site than the state, Commissioner Greeley added that the Law Department is concerned about assuming liability for a hazardous waste site. Mark Lanaghan, DEP, stated that the WSC project is tied up with the larger issue of brownfields remediation.

Mr. Caughman announced that this issue can be discussed at a Town Hall meeting on September 24th with Congressman Gregory Meeks, Assemblyman William Scarborough, New York State Senator Malcolm Smith and Councilman Leroy Comrie. Councilman Comrie added that Assemblyman Scarborough and Senator Smith are working to secure funding for WSC clean-up. A meeting is also being organized between DEP, DEC and elected officials to discuss the WSC issue.

Update on Station 6 Pilot Plant

Nicole Brown, Malcolm Pirnie, reported that the Station 6 Pilot Plant continues to operate without problems. Over the summer, engineers at the plant conducted a 30-day performance test of the filter membranes, which was successful. She added that the ozone processes are being "tweaked" and that similar performance tests will be conducted on those as well.

Ms. Brown reported on plant tours held this summer, including one with Councilman Comrie and one with approximately forty children from the "Step Up" program. The students, led by Ms. Hazel, were very enthusiastic and Ms. Hazel, noting that "involved children will create educated future consumers," expressed her interest in establishing an ongoing educational program concerning the project. Mr. Caughman added that the superintendent of Intermediate School 59 is also interested in involving his students.

Scientific Review Panel

Ms. Neuhaus described the work performed over the summer to establish the Scientific Review Panel (SRP). She stated that the process took longer than expected as many of the potential candidates were away during July and August. She noted that of the 84 individuals identified as possible SRP members, 13 were not, or could not be contacted (some candidates were eliminated from consideration because of conflict of interest, distance, or lack of relevant experience);18

declined; 25 were interested and available; 10 were possibly interested or undecided; and 17 did not respond at all.

Prior to the CAC meeting, the Health Subcommittee met to review seven resumes in the fields of Public Health/Epidemiology and Risk Assessment. The Engineering Subcommittee met at the same time and reviewed 23 resumes in the fields of Chemical Engineering; Chemistry; Civil and/or Environmental Engineering and Hydrogeology. It was noted that a number of the candidates being considered are experts in more than one discipline.

Ms. Hazel, speaking for the Health Subcommittee, reported that it had narrowed its list of candidates to the following four choices, who collectively have expertise in the fields of Epidemiology, Public Health and Risk Assessment: Jack Caravanos (Hunter College), Paul Lioy (Rutgers University), Alan Rabideau (SUNY Buffalo) and Robert Snyder (Rutgers University College of Pharmacy). Ms. Hazel also expressed her interest in inviting Dr. Dhanojoy Saha to serve on the Health Subcommittee and requested a packet of resumes for him, which was provided.

Mr. Caughman, as the sole CAC representative of the Engineering Committee, provided a list of twelve candidates in the following fields:

Civil/Environmental Engineering

- WSC Clean-Up
 - Alan Rabideau (SUNY Buffalo)
 - George Korfiatis (Stevens Technical Institute)
 - Yuan Ding (New Jersey Institute of Technology)
- Water Treatment/Processes
 - James Gossett (Cornell University)
 - James “Chip” Kilduff (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)

Chemistry/Chemical Engineering

- Len Lion (Cornell University)
- Hsin-Neng Hsieh (New Jersey Institute of Technology)
- Gilbert Hanson (SUNY Stony Brook)
- Robert Snyder (Rutgers College of Pharmacy)

Hydrogeology

- Henry Bokuniewicz (SUNY Stony Brook)
- James Mack (New Jersey Institute of Technology)
- Michael Wilson (SUNY Fredonia)
- Gilbert Hanson (SUNY Stony Brook)

In response to a procedural question from Ms. Neuhaus, the CAC decided to accept the recommendations of the subcommittees, rather than review the resumes as a full Committee. Following a short break, during which members of the Health Subcommittee briefed Dr. Saha on the candidates, the CAC reconvened to vote on the subcommittee recommendations. Prior to the vote, Ms. Hazel announced that in light of Dr. Saha’s familiarity with the issues and the

community, the subcommittee would like him to serve on the SRP to coordinate the activities of the Health panel members and act as a liaison between the SRP and the CAC. If necessary, he would step down from the CAC or recuse himself from the Committee when dealing with SRP issues. It was noted that Dr. Black, a member of the Health Subcommittee, had left the meeting and was not consulted on this recommendation. Ms. Neuhaus and Mr. Yulinsky questioned the need for a coordinator and expressed uncertainty about the role and responsibilities of a person in that position. It was agreed that the idea would be discussed further by the project team. In the meantime, a motion was made to accept the Health Subcommittee's above-referenced slate of four candidates, with the option to add Dr. Saha to the list, pending review of his resume. The motion was adopted unanimously.

A motion was made to accept the above-referenced recommendations of the Engineering Subcommittee, as presented by Mr. Caughman. The motion was adopted unanimously without discussion.

On a related matter, Mr. Lanaghan reported on Commissioner Ward's meeting over the summer with Assemblywoman Barbara Clark and Cathleen Breen of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). He indicated that Assemblywoman Clark requested a list of the SRP candidates, which was not provided, pending CAC review of the list. Mr. Lanaghan requested, and received, permission from the CAC to offer the list at this time. He also noted that NYPIRG had recommended a consulting firm for the SRP. Ms. Breen, who is the director of NYPIRG's Watershed Protection program, then explained her organization's interest in the BQA project and the qualifications of the consulting firm, Horsley & Whitten, which she described as being very community-minded. After Ms. Reddick expressed concern about elected officials getting involved late in the process when the CAC had already done its work, Ms. Neuhaus noted that the Committee had made a decision not to consider consultants for the SRP. It was decided to request a prospectus from Horsley & Whitten for possible future consideration and to provide Assemblywoman Clark with a list of the criteria for SRP candidates.

Other Issues

- Councilman Comrie described his recent trip to Israel with a City Council delegation and noted that he met with municipal officials to discuss their drinking water systems. He explained that Israel has serious drinking water problems and uses a filtration process similar to what is being tested at Station 6, which gave him more confidence in the BQA Pilot Project. Councilman Comrie is looking forward to receiving further information from Israel's officials, which he will share with the CAC.
- Ms. Neuhaus announced that, at the request of Hillside Manor, a donation will be made to YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities. Hillside Manor's staff has graciously hosted the CAC meetings free of charge; in response to an inquiry from HNA, they indicated that they would welcome a donation to YAI in lieu of a fee.
- CAC members raised the issue of sewer back-ups, especially in the area of Brinkerhoff Avenue and 175th Street. In particular, Mr. Hicks observed that the August 29th rainfall resulted in serious flooding and that sewer repairs in the area should be considered a very high priority. Commissioner Greeley responded that the Department agrees and is addressing the problem by looking at catch basins that are connected to the sanitary

sewers and making interim repairs using emergency funds. He added that there is a timeline for priority repairs but that 40%-50% of the current capital budget for sewer work is being spent in southeast Queens.

Commissioner Greeley also explained that sewers are not as simple as water mains, in that they are affected by elevation. In response to Ms. Hunte's assertion that a sewer project had been completed near Station 6 despite claims that it could not be done, he stated that certain conditions made that project possible.

After Commissioner Greeley indicated that he had spoken with Mr. Caughman about holding a Brinkerhoff Action Association meeting to discuss sewer overflow concerns, Mr. Caughman announced that the meeting would be held on Monday, October 7th.

The next CAC meeting will be held on **Thursday, October 3, 2002 at 7 p.m.** at the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center, 188-11 Hillside Avenue, Jamaica Estates.

Follow-up Items

1. Provide additional information on DEC's West Side Corporation (WSC) site. Responsibility: DEC/DEP/Malcolm Pirnie.
 - Summary of expenses, to date, related to the WSC clean-up, including the pilot tests and design costs. (Debra Hunte)
 - Locations where proposed remediation technology has been used successfully. (Kenneth Gill)
 - Monthly written report from DEC regarding status of WSC clean-up. (Irving Hicks)
 - Projected work schedule for WSC clean-up. (Irving Hicks)
2. Suggestion to meet with the Governor's New York City liaison. (Yvonne Reddick) Responsibility: Mark Lanaghan, DEP.
3. Inquiry as to DEC ranking of WSC site. (Yvonne Reddick) Responsibility: HNA.
4. Follow up with selected Scientific Review Panel (SRP) candidates. Responsibility: HNA.
5. Provide list of SRP candidates and criteria to NYPIRG. (Gloria Black, Linda Hazel) Responsibility: Mark Lanaghan/HNA.
6. Obtain prospectus from consultant recommended by NYPIRG. (Linda Hazel) Responsibility: HNA.

Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer Feasibility Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, September 5, 2002

Attendance List

CAC Members/Alternates

Gloria Black
Community Board #12

Manuel Caughman
Community Board #12
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Leroy Comrie
New York City Council

Kenneth Gill
Addisleigh Park Civic Association

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

Richard Hellenbrecht
Community Board #13

Irving Hicks
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Debora Hunte
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Yvonne Reddick
Community Board #12

Earl Roberts
Addisleigh Park Civic Association

Dr. Dhanonjoy C. Saha
Resident

Michael Turner
Addisleigh Park Civic Association

Guests

Cathleen Breen
New York Public Interest Research Group

Sarah Hicks
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Media

Courtney Dentch
Jamaica Times

Project Team

Nicole Brown
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Don Cohen
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Douglas Greeley
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Natasha Harper
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Mark Lanaghan
New York City Department of
Environmental Protection

Shive Mittal
New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation

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