

## Community Advisory Group (CAG) Minutes for Jan. 3, 2011

**Present:** Nels Bohn, Maria Coles, Ken Deschere, Regina Deschere, Peter Fortunato, Michele Palmer, Leia Raphaelidis, Eric Rosario, Kathy Woodcock

**Excused:** Jennifer Dotson, Valerie Pavan (resigned after meeting)

**Guest:** John Graves, President of the South Hill Civic Association

**Minutes** from the December 6, 2010 CAG meeting were approved and will be posted on the City of Ithaca website.

### **CAG COMMENTS:**

Peter Fortunato explained recent DEC testing at his house. One canister was placed outside for 24 hours while another canister will remain in his basement until pick up on Jan. 6, 2011.

P. Fortunato also reported seeing and smelling soap suds along Six Mile Recreation Way. He notified the City and Town. Then he followed the stream to a housing unit at Ithaca College and was informed a person may have released the soap. It is under further investigation by IC. CAG members expressed concern about recent Ithaca College construction and potential run-off issues.

### **UPDATES ABOUT SITES:**

**\*See the attached progress report from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)**

Harry Warner is the new Regional 7 DEC Regional Hazardous Waste Remediation Engineer (RHWRE) and can be contacted at

Harry D. Warner, PE, Region 7 RHWRE  
315-426-7551 hdwarner@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Karen Cahill, DEC Emerson Project Manager, said some things are still in pre-design stage. Upon completion of remedial design, it is open for discussion and/or revision.

**Morse/Emerson Vandalism** – John Graves investigated recent vandalism at the Emerson Site where on-site production activities have ceased. He saw and photographed broken glass at Building 24 and contacted Ithaca City Police about the incident. The next day plywood was nailed over the broken door window glass.

Eric Rosario offered to write an e-mail to Karen Cahill and attach these Emerson vandalism photos. DEC needs to be informed because Emerson doesn't have signs posted notifying the public about hazardous toxins.

Nels Bohn will notify the realtor who is selling the Emerson property about the vandalism.

**Markles Flats** – Eric Rosario explained that a ruling about who has the right to determine whether the building will be removed has not been fully resolved. Neighbors would like to see

the building removed but the City Landmarks Preservation Commission views this building as a historical site. The school district owns the property and would like the use of the land. To save the building, it would have to be moved in order to remove the coal tar underneath. This is problematic because the building is in poor repair. NYSEG at one time was willing to pay for the expense but this offer has changed due to the economy. The City of Ithaca may appeal a judge's recent decision to give the school district the power of determination.

**CAG DISCUSSION about Strategy for Maximizing CAG Effectiveness:**

- A. Site selection criteria for CAG Focus
- B. Outside Expertise: Cornell, IC, TC3
- C. Selection of Initial Site(s) for CAG Focus
- D. Communications with DEC/DOH

Kathy Woodcock thinks CAG should review DEC's update each month to determine which site needs to become top priority. Kathy also expressed her concern about a rare, uncommon form of cancer called eye melanoma. Her eye doctor knows of 4 cases of eye melanoma in Ithaca compared to an estimated 6 cases per one million people.

Leia Raphaelidis thinks we should concentrate on sites where health concerns affect the highest number of residents. But E.Rosario worries that this may create inequalities and feels issues should determine our focus. N.Bohn feels cancer causes are too broad and toxins cannot be determined as the primary cause.

Ken Deschere noted that understanding more about toxins and health effects makes sense and suggested inviting a toxicologist to a CAG meeting.

J. Graves thinks there needs to be a management plan to keep on top of site activity as noted in his Emerson investigation.

Maria Coles feels we need to set primary, secondary and tertiary goals because if no priorities are set, it will be difficult to accomplish anything.

Michele Palmer was not successful at finding a contact/liaison for the Town of Ithaca. E. Rosario and M. Coles will talk with Mayor Peterson about approaching the town. It was also suggested that Ithaca College be involved and that we invite an IC environmental staffer.

N. Bohn thinks CAG should encourage DEC and become advocates to inform neighbors about public meetings. Extend invitations to experts for speaking at public meetings.

**Assignments:**

- Ken and Regina Deschere – Share carcinogenic reports, gather speaker list
- Maria Coles – Contact Barbara Lifton for a list of experts & speak with mayor about town
- Eric Rosario – Write Emerson e-mail to Karen Cahill & speak with mayor about town

**Next Meeting Schedule:**

Monday, February 7, 2011 at City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conference Room, 6-7:30 p.m.

# Status of NYSDEC Remediation Sites in the City of Ithaca

## December 2010

### **Morse Industrial Site (Emerson) (Site No. 755010)**

A separate update was provided.

### **Offsite Former Axiohm Facility (Site No. C755012A)**

The DEC conducted Phase VII Soil Vapor Intrusion Testing the weeks of November 29 and December 6, 2010. The testing was conducted in 26 homes located along the 200 block of Columbia, along a portion of Hudson Street between the nature trail and Columbia Street, along Crescent Place, and along a portion of Pearsall Place. This phase of testing was associated with the Therm sanitary sewer. Validated results are expected within approximately two months.

### **Campagnolo Property (Site No. 755013)**

Soil vapor intrusion sampling was conducted at two houses in December 2010. This activity was conducted pursuant to the Record of Decision (ROD). The remedial design process is moving forward. Remedial work identified in the ROD will be conducted as part of the remedial design contract.

### **315 North Meadow Street (Site No. 755014)**

The Record of Decision is complete. Region 7 Division of Environmental Remediation staff is working with the Central Office to get the Remedial Design/Remedial Action initiated.

### **Clinton West Plaza (Site No. 755015)**

The remedial design contract been administered and the remedial design work has been started. Sub-slab vacuum pressure testing has been conducted at the commercial building. Information from this testing will be used in the design of the sub-slab depressurization (SSD) system. The SSD system may be installed by the end of January 2011. Additional groundwater sampling may be conducted; the groundwater sampling data will be used to aid in the remedial design. All of this work is being conducted pursuant to the ROD for this site.

### **Ithaca Gun (Site No. V00511)**

The consultant is currently working on a report to document the demolition activities. Investigation work is ongoing; recent investigation activities include monitoring well replacement, groundwater sampling, and soil vapor sampling.

### **Ithaca Falls Overlook (Site No. E755018)**

On December 6, 2010, the DEC sent a letter to the City of Ithaca inquiring whether or not: (1) the City would like to request a no-cost time extension amendment to their State Assistance Contract; and (2) if the City has any request for reimbursement of eligible costs.

### **Ithaca Court Street (Site No. 755008)**

*OU1 (Plant site and wooden duct from N. Plain Street to Meadow Street):* The approved construction completion report is expected to be in the document repositories by the end of 2010. The final decision of how to address the Markles Flats building is expected in early 2011. Regardless of what that decision is, NYSEG hopes to be able to act on that decision by the end of 2011.

*OU2 (off-site areas):* The removal of the wooden duct from Meadow Street to Fulton is expected to be completed by the end of December 2010. The pipe in the middle of the street changed from a clay tile to an iron pipe, and the ducts changed from two separate ducts to a stacked pair. This configuration of the ducts and the "steel pipe" instead of the clay tile is consistent with the reports DEC had west of Fulton, so no surprises are anticipated during the investigation west of Fulton. DEC expects to have a clear and consistent picture of the conduits when the OU2 Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) is presented. The OU2 Remedial Investigation was placed in the repositories this past fall. Additional information on surface soil will be inserted into those reports shortly, at which point DEC will formally approve that report. The feasibility study will be submitted to the DEC in December 2010, and DEC expects to present a PRAP to the community in May 2011, although every effort will be made to release the PRAP earlier.

### **Ithaca First Street MGP site (Site No. 755006)**

The Remedial Investigation has been completed and the report is under review by the NYSDEC. The feasibility study is expected to be submitted to the NYSDEC by late December 2010 or early January 2011. DEC expects to present the Proposed Remedial Action Plan to the public in May 2011, but will be making every attempt to compress that schedule to support planned improvements at the sewage treatment plant.

## **Morse Industrial Corporation Site (Emerson Power Transmission) - 755010**

DEC commentary and documents related to this site are located at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8669.html>

The 2009 Amendment to the 1994 Record of Decision for this site was released in June 2009 and is here:

[http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/regions\\_pdf/morserodamd.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/regions_pdf/morserodamd.pdf)

It summarizes the amendment agreement:

### **Description of Selected Remedy**

Based on the results of the Supplemental Remedial Program and Alternatives Analysis (SRP/AA) for the Morse Industrial Corporation site and the criteria identified for evaluation of alternatives, the Department has selected a combination of source removal and in situ treatment. The components of the remedy are as follows:

1. A remedial design program will be implemented to provide the details necessary for the construction, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of the remedial program.
2. Upgrades to the existing groundwater extraction and treatment system, currently being completed as an Interim Remedial Measure (IRM), to provide greater hydraulic control of the groundwater plume within the bedrock subsurface and to increase the removal rate of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the dissolved phase and the vapor phase.
3. In situ treatment of groundwater in the vicinity of the fire water reservoir to supplement the upgraded groundwater extraction and treatment system.
4. Repair and maintenance of the concrete slab in the former Department 507 degreaser area within Building 4 to address the potential for soil vapor intrusion. Construction and maintenance of a low-permeability cap over the area of associated groundwater contamination outside Building 4 to limit recharge. In situ treatment of the groundwater will also be provided.
5. Sealing/repair of cracks and penetrations in on-site buildings to be completed as an IRM to eliminate the potential for plant employees to be exposed to VOC vapors via soil vapor intrusion.
6. Removal and off-site disposal of free product from Areas of Concern (AOCs) 4, 15, and 24 to eliminate potential sources of soil and/or groundwater contamination.
7. Completion of an alternatives analysis and selection of remedial actions to address the migration of VOC vapors into the surrounding neighborhood and to mitigate the potential for residents to be exposed via soil vapor intrusion into homes. The Department will prepare a Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) for public review and comment, and subsequently will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) to identify the remedy selected for implementation.

8. Development of a Site Management Plan to identify and implement all required institutional and engineering controls, including all necessary operation, maintenance, and monitoring activities.

9. Imposition of an institutional control in the form of an environmental easement that will require: (a) limiting the use and development of the property to industrial use; (b) compliance with the approved Site Management Plan; (c) restricting the use of groundwater as a source of potable or process water without necessary water quality treatment as determined by NYSDOH; and (d) the property owner to complete and submit to the Department a periodic certification of institutional and engineering controls.

10. The property owner will provide periodic certification of institutional and engineering controls, prepared and submitted by a professional engineer or other such expert acceptable to the Department, until the Department notifies the property owner in writing that this certification is no longer needed. This submittal will: a) contain certification that the institutional controls put in place are still in place and are either unchanged from the previous certification or are compliant with Department-approved modifications; b) allow the Department access to the site; and c) state that nothing has occurred that will impair the ability of the control to protect public health or the environment, or constitute failure to comply with the Site Management Plan unless otherwise approved by the Department.

### **COMMENTS (as of 12/7/2010):**

1. Depending upon the results of the pre-design investigations as described under #3 and #4 below, it is anticipated that a the Remedial Design Program will include design components for in-situ groundwater treatment in the vicinity of the Fire Water Reservoir; in-site groundwater treatment downgradient of Building No. 4 (former Degreaser area); and placement of a low-permeability cap outside Building No. 4. Emerson plans to submit a pre-design investigation report in early 2011, and discuss with DEC the next steps for the remedy.
2. The Dual Phase Extraction (DPE) System was installed in January 2009. Progress Reports #1 and #2 (covering January-June 2009 and July-December 2009, respectively) have been released and provided to us. "The DPE system is comprised of 10 extraction wells and associated equipment for treating aqueous and vapor phase streams..." Extracted water is filtered, treated, and released to "SPDES Outfall #001" adjacent to the Fire Water Reservoir and at the very top (south end) of South Cayuga Street. The extracted vapors (influent vapors, volatilized vapors from the "equilization tank" and the effluent vapors from the air-stripper) are filtered through two one-thousand-pound vessels of Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) before being discharged into the air through a stack.

Clearly, the DPE system is extracting much larger quantities of VOCs than the previous "pump-and-treat" system. However, the levels of VOCs in both the air and water taken into the DPE system remain very high, as do the levels found in groundwater test wells on the EPT plant site. The lowering of the groundwater table in the treatment area, as well as the capture of VOCs by the system itself, help to minimize the down-gradient migration these toxins, but the test well readings are still high. The September 2009 reading from Extraction Well 6-60C (located next to Outfall#001, between the Fire Water Reservoir and the top of South Cayuga Street) was **47,000** micrograms per liter. The TCE reading from the same month at Monitoring Well 5-40 (**up-**

gradient from the FWR) was **28,000** micrograms per liter. The DPE system may be working as intended, but it has a long way to go to significantly lower the toxins levels around the FWR.

3. Emerson has been conducting a series of pre-design supplemental investigations in the area of the fire water reservoir to better understand groundwater conditions and the nature of the bedrock. The reservoir has been taken out of service due to the facility closing. The pre-design investigations conducted to date have included installing borings/wells below and along the hill west of the reservoir; investigating the base of the reservoir to assess the nature of the bedrock surface (fractures); collecting/analyzing groundwater samples from these areas; and conducting additional geophysical surveys to assess the bedrock and fractures. The goal of the pre-design work is to develop a comprehensive understanding of groundwater quality and flow pathways below and surrounding the reservoir as these are key elements with respect assessing any a supplemental remedy. The pre-design investigation work is continuing and expected to be completed early in 2011
4. The concrete slab in the former degreaser area in Bldg. 4 has been repaired, and the area outside the building is currently paved with asphalt and in good condition. Per the 2009 ROD Amendment, two additional monitoring wells were to be installed downgradient of the former degreaser area to determine extent, if any, of affected groundwater. These wells were installed and sampled in October 2010. VOCs were detected in one well above 10,000 ppb and at trace levels in the other. Emerson plans to conduct additional pre-design investigations to evaluate the extent of VOCs to the west of the well with 10,000 ppb. Pilot testing for in-site treatment of groundwater (In-Site Chemical Oxidation) will be performed following the pre-design investigation work (Spring 2011) with remedy implementation to follow late summer/fall 2011. Placement of the new low permeability cap will be completed in the spring of 2011.
5. Sealing of plant walls and floors has been **completed** and has resulted in lower indoor-air readings for site-related chemicals, where it has been used.
6. Oil removal efforts were initiated by Emerson in January 2010 and are continuing. Currently wells within these AOCs have only a sheen of oil on the groundwater surface.
7. The ROD for the downhill neighborhood (Operable Unit 3) was released in October 2010. It proposes replacement of about 300 feet of sewer along East Spencer Street, **installation of a vapor venting system**, and monitoring of the discharge from **the system**, but NO further testing in the affected neighborhoods.
8. Access to buildings 3, 4, and 24 is restricted, with a Health and Safety Plan (HASP) located at each entrance to each building.
9. This institutional control is essential to protecting the health of all who may try to use the EPT site property for any purpose in the future. As negotiations concerning the possible sale of the site are private, we do not know how this requirement is being met. **The Environmental Easement will be recorded and a DEC-approved Site Management Plan implemented once the remedial action is completed and approved.**
10. We can only hope that all owners and developers of the property will comply with the Site Management Plan. How far into the future monitoring and reporting will be required is not

known. As a convention, a time frame of 30 years was used to evaluate present worth costs for alternatives with an indefinite duration. This does not imply that operation, maintenance, or monitoring would cease after 30 years if remediation goals are not achieved.

Prepared by Ken Deschere, 12/7/2010

Comments in RED provided by Karen Cahill, 12/23/2010