

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

MEETING MINUTES  
Fairmont Community Liaison Panel  
November 4, 1999

Attendees: Barry Bledsoe, Michael Cummings, Nick Fantasia,  
Lt. Greg Freme (attending for Chief Wimer), Tom  
Grabb (attending for Mark Thompson), Georgeann  
Grewe,  
Karen Gribben, Bea Hunter, Bruce McDaniel,  
Barbara Metcalfe, John Parks, Robert Sapp, Ron Swope,  
Tom Vincent, John Watson, Norma Watson.

Exxon Representatives: Art Chin, John Hannig.

Agency Representatives: Melissa Pennington, Hilary Thornton, Rich Kuhn,  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);  
Tom Bass, West Virginia Division of Environmental  
Protection (WVDEP).

Guests: Griff Fowler; Rocky Mazza, Jackie Marhefka, Fairmont  
Times-West Virginian; Lori Schmidt; Roberta Riccio,  
(EPA); Doug Taylor.

Facilitator: Roberta Fowlkes, Ann Green Communications, Inc.

Minutes: Dan T. Londeree, Ann Green Communications, Inc.

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The November meeting of the Fairmont Community Liaison Panel (FCLP) was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Roberta Fowlkes, facilitator. Guests introduced themselves.

Roberta reviewed the agenda, and the item of site aerial photos was added. The minutes of the October meeting were approved as distributed.

Project Update

John Hannig reviewed the project update handout. [A copy is attached for those not present.] He said the concrete and brick crushing and the additional waste characterization work have been completed and, therefore, were removed from the project update list. He said routine site security visits continue. He said fence repairs are planned for a section damaged by a fallen tree, and for a gap made in the fence to move equipment to an uphill part of the site. John said work is planned for removing equipment from two subbasements located on site, and then filling them. He said this work requires confined space entry procedures. Both jobs are projected to be completed in December. He said an item too recent to be included on his handout is an effort to remove the existing impoundment onsite. He said the water in the impoundment has a low pH level and will be neutralized before being drained offsite.

John reviewed plans for the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) reports. He said a day-long meeting was held with Exxon, EPA and WVDEP regarding the EE/CA reports. He said many issues have been resolved and projected the Waste Management Area report would be released in December or January. John said there may not be a reason to have a December meeting, because this report will not be released by then. He said a better plan may be to have a January 2000 meeting, which would include a presentation on the Waste Management Area EE/CA report. He said the approval of the report by the agencies some time after that meeting would lead to a public comment period of 30 days, which would then be followed by a public meeting. He said this public meeting may be coordinated with the March 2000 FCLP meeting. John said if this timing works out, field work on the Waste Management Area would begin several months later and would hopefully be completed by year end 2000.

John said the Process Area EE/CA report has a separate schedule. He said the work in the Process Area likely will consist of "hot spot removal," which he explained as removing material from isolated locations where contamination levels are elevated. He said material from these locations would be removed and taken to a proper offsite disposal facility. He said this work may be completed by mid-year 2001.

John reviewed a new item under the Redevelopment initiative, entitled "Target Marketing Plan." He said a scope of work is being prepared for the development of a site marketing brochure for posting on the Internet. He said this online brochure will include aerial photos of the site, showing its proximity to the Monongahela River and Interstate 79. He said the brochure also will include a summary description of the property and what the site has to offer to future developers. He said it will also include an estimate of when the property will be available to prospective buyers.

In response to a question, John said Exxon plans to sell the property outright to a purchaser, as opposed to leasing the land.

John said the administration building is undergoing some improvements to allow the structure to continue to serve as an office space during the course of the field work. He said the structure likely will eventually be demolished, based on anticipated redevelopment considerations. Art Chin said improvements to the bathrooms and the addition of shower facilities is for workers to clean themselves after work. He said these improvements are not intended for future use after field work is complete.

In response to a question, John said Exxon has no plans to improve the property further after the cleanup work is complete. He said the company plans to sell it after the work is complete and allow the next owner to decide if the property needs any further improvements.

#### Communication Update

Panel members had no new information to report. Roberta said there have been no calls to the community information line.

John reviewed a letter he has drafted for eventual mailing to residents living near the site. He said the purpose of the letter is to let residents know what has been happening on the site and to keep them informed about future work. He asked for feedback from panel members and said he would like to send the letter out by early December. [A copy of the letter is attached for those not present.]

#### Offsite Subcommittee Issues Update

Robert Sapp said the subcommittee met November 3 with Exxon, EPA and WVDEP. He said the meeting discussion centered around how to handle concerns regarding potential offsite contamination. He said during the course of the meeting it was shown that it is not EPA's, WVDEP's or Exxon's responsibility to investigate individual houses for any material that may or may not have come from the site, or from the Sharon Steel plant when it was in operation. He said the source to contact regarding this issue is the Department of Public Health, and Karen Gribben has volunteered to contact the department.

Robert said the issue of cancer has become a main focus of health concerns, when in reality cancer should fall into the category of health risks. Robert said other issues that were raised were the difficulty of tracking the origin of any contamination found in homes and establishing boundaries for a testing area.

Tom Bass of WVDEP said his agency and EPA have attempted to contact the organizations that are appropriate to handle this issue. He said under Superfund, the regulatory agencies do not have the authority to deal with homes located offsite, because they are given authority only to deal with the site itself. He said he is not allowed to expand the site boundaries to a home when there is not evidence to support this action. He said only one area of the site has been identified as having possible migration offsite and this area is not impacting residents.

Tom said if the boundaries are expanded to include a home, then the homeowner is put in a bad situation because the house is now on property listed on the National Priorities List. He said the homeowner then will likely not be able to sell the house. He said the site boundaries have been established to directly reflect the data collected regarding areas containing contamination. He said he has heard that most people with concerns are referring to historical events from when the plant was in operation. He said in this case, no agency goes into a home to sample the home. He said it is the prerogative of the homeowner to check into the situation. He said if the contamination exists, but it cannot be traced to a current source, then there is no basis for any regulatory agency to take action against a specific party.

A discussion followed regarding health concerns. During the discussion, the point was made that if residents possessed the information regarding current onsite contamination and the lack of offsite contamination, concerns would be alleviated. Barry Bledsoe said the information has been in the newspaper. John Parks said most people do not have the information and do not know the facts of the site. He said if they knew these things, they would not have concerns.

Tom said the formal EE/CA report has not yet been released, and the report contains the information needed to alleviate concerns. A discussion followed regarding how to distribute a condensed version of the information, and the panel advised John Hannig to include this information in his letter to the community. Bruce McDaniel suggested referencing the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) report and pointing to the findings of the upcoming EE/CA report. Tom said, based upon the information from the ATSDR report and the EE/CA report, the agencies believe there is no unacceptable risk to the community surrounding the site. The panel advised John to use this information in his letter to residents, and offered comments to help John revise his letter.

Bruce McDaniel offered an update regarding drinking water sampling. He said he would like to get the names and addresses of those concerned about their drinking water and begin testing. Robert Sapp said he will get the name of the person concerned and also will get names and addresses of panel members for testing. Bruce clarified the testing is being done by the City of Fairmont solely for drinking water and is not related to the Sharon Steel site.

## **New Business**

### FCLP Survey

Roberta reviewed the FCLP survey results. [A revised copy of the results is attached for those not present.]

### Presentation of Aerial Photos

Tom Bass presented aerial photos of the site. He said the photos are from 1998 and he is currently working on scanning in current photos of the site. Ron Swope suggested having an overlay of the different areas of the site designated for cleanup on the photograph of the property. He said this may help in understanding the activities that will be included in the EE/CA reports.

### Other Comments

Roberta Riccio of EPA said she is the project manager for the adjacent Big John's Salvage site and said that site is being proposed for listing on the National Priorities List (NPL) in January 2000. She said EPA is beginning to search for Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) and said if anyone has questions for her, to please call her. Her phone number is: (215)-814-3107.

## **Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting will be January 6, 2000. The agenda will include a presentation of the Waste Management Area EE/CA report, a project update and a communication update.

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**            **Thursday, January 6, 2000**  
                                 **5 p.m. - Refreshments**  
                                 **5:30 p.m. - Meeting**