

NAVAL BASE CHARLESTON  
Minutes of the  
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Monday, December 11, 2000

Sterrett Hall  
Hobson Avenue, North Charleston SC

RAB Members Attending

Tony Hunt	Navy Co-Chair
Keith Collinsworth	SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
Don Harbert	Community Member
Wannetta Mallette	City of North Charleston
Dann Spariosu	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Bob Veronee	SPAWAR

Guests Attending

Bobby Dearhart	Community Member
Daisey Frazier	Community Member
Andrea Gregory	Community Member
Cheryl Huggins	Community Member
Carolyn Jackson	Community Member
Kevin Tunstall	Community Member
Lisa Belton	Charleston Center
Frank Portera	D.P. Academic
Paul Bergstrand	SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
Elizabeth Frady	SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
Mihir Mehta	SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
Tom Beisel	CH2M-Jones
Brian Crawford	CH2M-Jones
Gary Foster	CH2M-Jones
Dean Williamson	CH2M-Jones
Suzanne Zoda	EnviroComm
Keith Johns	EnSafe Inc.

Welcome and Administrative Remarks

Tony Hunt began the meeting and started the introductions. Mr. Hunt invited everyone to attend the regular RAB meetings, usually held every other month at the Olde North Charleston Meeting Place.

## Building 1189/Former Dry Cleaners

### *Background Discussion*

Mr. Hunt began by identifying the building which houses the dry cleaners as Building 1189, built in 1941. This building was renovated and also used as morale, welfare and recreation offices on the base. He noted that Building 1189 is not presently used and no equipment is in the building.

Mr. Hunt explained that in 1993 the Navy began looking for contamination in the soil and groundwater all over the base. In 1996, the Navy discovered soil and groundwater contamination under Building 1189. The soil contamination is confined to areas underneath the building and is not threatening any source of drinking water. Therefore, the buildings adjacent to 1189 -- the gas station, the magnet school, and Building 225 -- were determined to be fine for leasing, since there was no immediate danger from the site.

That discovery was part of the ongoing environmental investigations. The Navy continued to investigate all other sites on the base for contamination. The Navy has only begun taking corrective measures in the last year and a half.

Mr. Hunt presented slides showing where Building 1189 is in relation to other buildings and streets.

### *Current Status of Site Characterization*

Tom Beisel (CH2M-Jones) presented slides showing the direction of groundwater flow at the facility. In this neighborhood, he explained, the topography is fairly flat. The water flows into a sewer and then into a water treatment facility. Mr. Beisel showed a slide with dots representing the wells that have already been placed on the property. The highest concentration of contamination is right beside the dry cleaner. Around that is a "dissolved phase" of much lower concentrations.

### *Path Forward*

Mr. Beisel told the gathering that a comprehensive program of sampling is about to begin before any cleanup activities begin. He alerted nearby residents of Building 225 that sampling teams would be right around their building, and they would do as much as possible to minimize any disruptions to the routine there.

Mr. Beisel pointed out that air samples will be taken from inside a few empty rooms in Building 225. Those rooms are on the side closest to Building 1189. Air samples (called "soil gas") were to be collected from underneath the building. He discussed how this sampling was going to take place.

Mr. Beisel said the most visible bunch of technicians were going to be installing additional groundwater wells near Building 225. These will be built and sampled to get an idea of status of the dissolved phase of contamination under Building 225.

### *Implementation Schedule*

Mr. Beisel presented a slide showing all the proposed air and soil sampling locations. He noted

that there will also be wells installed at the property boundary. Air sampling (both indoors and underneath the building) would begin the following week. Results from these samples should be back from the laboratory sometime in the middle of January.

### *Open Discussion*

A community member asked if anyone in Building 225 would have to move out of the building when the air sampling begins. Mr. Beisel responded no. He explained what the residents can expect to see. For sampling air from under the building, a short pipe would be stuck underneath the building, and a silver can is hooked up to the pipe. Vacuum in the can will pull the air from underneath the building into the can. The can is sent to the lab to be analyzed. For indoor air sampling, they use only the can. The can will be placed inside a closed, empty room on the back side of the building. It pulls in the air throughout the day, then it is sealed and sent to a lab for analysis.

A community member inquired if this testing is to see whether or not the residents of Building 225 will have to move. Mr. Hunt responded that the soil gas and groundwater data they will be gathering will answer if the residents can stay there during the remediation planned for Building 1189. Keith Collinworth (SCDHEC) added that this data will help find out if any of the residents are at a health risk. If the results of the sampling indicate that the residents' health might be at risk, then the residents will be moved. If the data comes back clean, then they're going to evaluate whether the residents need to relocate during cleanup or whether the residents can stay.

A community member asked why, if the Navy knew about this problem for so long, cleanup didn't begin sooner. Mr. Hunt responded that the Navy knew about the contamination in 1996, but their information showed that there was no immediate risk, so there was no need to do a quick cleanup. The Navy had to look at the entire base and see where people might be at risk, and focus on those places first. The Navy is still doing the investigative work for contamination, but has begun doing some cleanup work.

The community member also wanted to know if they have someplace to go if they have to be moved. Mr. Hunt replied that, if the residents are to be moved, the Redevelopment Authority will be a part of the process. The lease between the Navy and the Redevelopment Authority contains a provision that allows the Navy to go back to a building and do the cleanup if necessary.

Mr. Collinworth responded that they're going to do everything they can to do the cleanup in a way so the residents don't have to move. He said that SCDHEC's last resort is to have the residents move.

Suzanne Zoda provided a short summary of the investigation history of the site. The Navy knew about the contamination in 1996. She reminded the audience of the slide that showed all the dots indicating wells that have been installed. This, she said, shows how much data the Navy has collected about the contamination at the site. She noted that this data shows there's no reason to believe that the residents are not safe.

Ms. Zoda continued, explaining that the question only recently came up about whether the residents could stay in the building during cleanup. The Project Team took a step back and looked again to make absolutely sure. She explained that this is why the indoor sampling is being done. There's no reason to believe from the data already obtained that there's a problem for anyone inside the magnet school or any of the other buildings nearby. Mr. Collinsworth agreed, noting that SCDHEC feels that the school is fine. When the original transfer or lease took place, the Redevelopment Authority disclosed all of the contamination that is known in these buildings to the tenants.

A community member asked about how the vapors might affect the community behind the base. Mr. Beisel said that the vapors will be controlled by an emission system designed to prevent vapors from impacting people.

Lisa Belton asked what the residents could expect to see happening in the next week. Mr. Beisel replied there will be two guys running around with a hammer and maybe a saw. Their job is to cut through the concrete around Building 225, drive the probes underneath the building and sample the gas. In January, when they put in the wells, there's going to be a big truck with a drill rig on it. The truck has a tall mast on it that spins and drills holes into the ground. Mr. Beisel pointed out that these people will be wearing safety equipment and masks to keep the soil off of them, just in case it's contaminated. For everyone's safety, they're going to be sampling the air as they drill into the ground. He said that the hours of operation have not been determined yet, but that each well would take two to four hours for the whole operation. (He later noted that the drill rig itself would only operate for about half an hour for each well.) Seven wells will be installed.

Several community members expressed concerns that their small children might not be safe around the wells. Ms. Belton wanted to make sure there was protection around the wells so no one would fall in. Mr. Beisel said that there were two reasons not to be concerned about anyone falling in. First, immediately after the hole is drilled, a plastic casing is put down the hole and then concrete is put in the hole, so there won't be an opening for anyone to fall in. Second, the hole is only about two inches in diameter; far too small for anyone to get stuck in.

Ms. Zoda said that the drill rigs would not be working at night.

One community member asked what to do in the worse case scenario. Mr. Beisel replied that if the workers detect anything dangerous with their monitoring devices, they'll immediately close the hole up. He reminded the audience that the holes are the only place any vapor will come from. This is just investigation work, not cleanup. Mr. Collinsworth confirmed that the workers won't allow a dangerous condition, they'll close it down. Someone added that, even if vapors did come out of the hole, it wouldn't be like gas from a broken gas line, a geyser or anything dramatic. The vapors being talked about are closely associated with the soil and don't spew out.

A community member said her room is right above this work, that she fears for her kids. Ms. Belton assured her that wells are already in place and information from those wells indicates that it's safe to be breathing the air. Mr. Beisel agreed, adding that those wells are there only to help

determine how far the dissolved phase extends. Mr. Collinsworth said that everyone will know much more after this data is collected.

A community member stated her main concern was her three-month old child. The response was that the workers will be wearing respirators as a precautionary measure. There's nothing that's going to spew out of the ground. Those workers are going to be looking directly down the hole, so they have to be prepared, just in case. Wannetta Mallette stated that she had been at other sites where they were installing wells without wearing protective clothing. It was safe.

Mr. Beisel said that the estimated time to complete all seven wells is five days, possibly three.

A community member stated her twins were scared of loud noises. Ms. Zoda stated with the windows closed during the winter, the noise won't be too loud. Mr. Beisel said the noise is about like a tractor or bulldozer. He also explained that the drill rig will operate only for about a half hour. The rest of the time the workers will be putting the pipes in the ground, so there will be much less noise for most of the operation.

Mr. Hunt stated that the normal RAB meeting is scheduled January 9th, but they want to delay it until the data comes back from the sampling. Therefore, the next meeting will be late in January. Mr. Hunt will give out the results to the residents as soon as he can.

Meeting Adjourned

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Tony Hunt  
Navy Co-Chair

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Louis Mintz  
Community Co-Chair