

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council
York Park Task Force Meeting Minutes - Special
6 March 2021 10:00am
Zoom
Address Los Angeles, CA 90042

AGENDA - Draft

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Time: 10:06am

Committee Member	Present	Not Present
Steve Crouch	X	
Elizabeth Kerstein	X	
Danny Obeler	X	
Estrella Sainburg	X	
Emily Spokes	X	
Total:	5	

Note: If a committee member arrives after call to order you must write in time arrived. If committee member leaves before adjournment you must note the time he/she leaves.

2. [1hour] Discussion about next steps for York Park.

Public Comment

Emily:

- Intro to the history; concern that this is affecting the groundwater. This company was successfully sued for not cleaning up another site. 4700 tons of contaminated soil should have been moved; allegedly did not happen. Meeting going forward to gather substantive concerns to go to prove the issue to the city; retesting is quite expensive.

Scott (SHSW):

- Environmental consultant suggests that retesting is the quickest thing to do; ballpark figure of analysis of shallow soil samples is \$70/sample; full site assessment could be \$10K; if groundwater is contaminated, it isn't affecting anything on the surface (ie drinking fountain).

Estrella:

- Concerns that oil vapor barrier was not placed to keep them contained. No record of soil being removed. Asked Danny to compile the info being raised.

Mario Diaz:

- Contact willing to help fund soil sampling; info sent to Emily.

Steve Crouch:

- What is the goal here?
- Contact Yolanda Noguera (sp?) used to be on the council; family business is two-story brick building across the street.

Mario Diaz:

- Goal is to find out how bad the communication is; allegedly the soil is still contaminated; new topsoil was tested but contaminants remain underneath.

Emily

- We want satisfactory proof that what is on record with the city actually happened; not satisfied right now bc many residents in the surrounding area believe that the vapor barrier was never present. Asks Scott whether taking a shallower dirt sample is satisfactory re: children's health.

Scott

- One of the most important documents is the 2011 Water Quality Control Board letter, which asserts that the site was cleaned up.
- **2011 02.08CA Water QC Closure – Underground Storage Tank Contamination: this is the document that the City would consider as closing the case.**
- Scott works for ATC Group services environmental consulting co in South El Monte.

Mario

- Site was empty for 20 years. Mr. Maddux (sp) and daughter assert that the site was too contaminated to clean up.
- Allegedly site is owned by Rec and Parks.

Elizabeth

- Is there ongoing litigation about this site currently? Because if there is, we should consult those documents to get anything more than allegations about problems.

Sylva Blackstone

- Alleges that Sparkletts no longer uses the spring water of the surrounding areas.
- Worked at Oxy and saw problems with groundwater coming to the surface.

Scott

- Agrees that Sparkletts was in this location to use the artesian water here. Says that residents are on city water, which is regularly tested.

Emily:

- Wants to get soil testing done asap. How can we confirm whether there is a vapor barrier.

Sylva:

- Go to Board of Public Works to access a public document to see if there's a vapor barrier.

Scott:

- He can go take the samples; does it need to be approved by the city?

Mario:

- LA Bureau of Engineering has to approve permit.

Maria

- Concerns up to this point are based on hearsay.

Gemma:

- Turned over a binder to Stephanie with many documents re: this matter. Emily will locate it.

Action Items:

- Emily will locate binder that Gemma referenced from Stephanie.
- Consult Board of Public Works to access construction plans or docs post-construction (As-Builts or blueprints etc) to see if there's a vapor barrier.
- Scott will run his own vapor test at no cost.
- Check with LA County Superior Court to see if there's any ongoing litigation that might have concrete evidence of there being a problem.
- Get a soil sample permit from the LA Bureau of Engineering; then proceed with soil sampling.

3. Adjournment

Public Comment: None

Emily Spokes moves to adjourn the meeting at 11:18am. Steve Crouch seconds.

	For	Against	Abstain	Recused	Ineligible	Absent
Steve Crouch	X					
Elizabeth Kerstein	X					
Danny Obeler	X					
Estrella Sainburg						X
Emily Spokes	X					
Total:	4					1

Motion carries.

Danny Obeler's Notes

- Background:
 - Lack of proof that the site's ground wells were cleaned up properly
 - Allegations of contaminated underground wells
 - 4,700 tons of contaminated soil should have been removed but allegedly was not
 - The same company was successfully sued for not properly cleaning up another site
 - Supporting files can be accessible via the supporting docs from the Feb 22 Sustainability Committee Meeting, including "Feb. 8, 2011 Closure Package – issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region"

- Task Force was established to gather substantive concerns in order to prove to the City whether any remaining contamination in the soil or groundwater could pose a risk to those using the park or groundwater.
 - Ultimately, seeking satisfactory proof that the original clean up recorded by the city is verifiable and was completed properly, or else new testing of soil samples should be required
 - Not satisfied right now because many residents in the surrounding area believe that the vapor barrier was never present

- Under Review
 - Looking into if there is an oil vapor barrier on site to support containment
 - Potentially can be confirmed within construction documents, such as plans, as-built diagrams, and post-construction review (via Bureau of Public Works)
 - Future testing may involve an evacuation order prior to work
 - Can use non-invasive approaches to get initial readings
 - Independent samples can be procured and distributed to two separate labs.
 - Environmental consultant suggests that retesting is the quickest thing to do;
 - Ballpark figure of analysis of shallow soil samples: \$70/sample; full site assessment could be \$10K
 - If groundwater is contaminated, it is not affecting anything on the surface (ie drinking fountain).
 -
 - Per Mario, a report by Mr. Maddux did initial reporting on lot and noted that the lot was too contaminated to clean up
 - Sparklett's Water Company
 - At some point, the company moved away from using artesian spring water source
 - History of local clean up at site
 - Huizar's indictment could/should lead to reassessment of public projects

- Action Items from 3/6/2021:
 - Consult Board of Public Works to access construction plans or docs post-construction (As-Builts or blueprints etc) to see if there's a vapor barrier.
 - Scott will run his own vapor test at no cost.
 - Check with LA County Superior Court to see if there's any ongoing litigation that might have concrete evidence of there being a problem.
 - Get a soil sample permit from the LA Bureau of Engineering; then proceed with soil sampling.

Notes on York Park remediation efforts from Sarah Flaherty, Field Deputy, Councilmember Kevin de León (Council District 14)

All five gasoline and oil tanks were removed in 1999. This followed efforts to clean up the contamination from those tanks dating back to 1982.

A contaminant of primary concern was benzene. When clean up began, it was detected as high as 18 mg/kg, much higher than the EPA Screening Level for residential property of 1.1 mg/kg. After remediation in 2009, this was reduced to well below the EPA standard, down to 0.026 mg/kg,

The clean up included, among other things, the removal and disposal of 4,700 tons of soil in 2001 and 2009.

After soil remediation in 2009, samples were collected to confirm the clean up, as far down as 15 feet, which was well below the 6 to 12 feet where groundwater reached.

21 monitoring wells were installed at the site, which confirmed the cleanup of groundwater,

The last two soil borings, in May 2010, went as deep as 21 feet and "did not detect any petroleum constituents."

Following the clean up, RWQCB determined there was:

- no "direct contact concerns" related to soil contamination,
- no impact to the drinking water aquifer, and
- no impacts to wells downstream.

In supporting its determination of adequate remediation, RWQCB staff reasoned:

- The source of contamination had been removed.
- The extent of soil and groundwater contamination had been adequately defined.
- 610 gallons of gasoline were recovered.
- In 2001 and 2009, a total of 4,710 tons of impacted soils were removed from the site.
- Residual contamination showed continued reduction during the decade of monitoring.
- No impact to the down-gradient wells had been detected, and the nearest well producing water is located 3,812 ft from the site.
- Any residual soil and groundwater contamination are unlikely to cause significant human health and environmental risks via major pathways, such as direct contact, drinking water ingestion, and vapor intrusion.

Contacts

- Oscar Espino-Padron: oespino-padron@earthjustice.org
- Gomez office:
- Jeff Rex:
- Nancy Verma:
- Danielle S. Hoague, Ph.D. student at UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability
- Scott: Environmental Scientist