

Parker Street Waste Site Public Involvement Plan Meeting
Keith Middle School Auditorium
April 12, 2011
6:00-8:00pm

Questions and Comments received during the meeting related to the City's work which were not answered that evening

Site General

- 1. Comment: I am very concerned about the number of health issues I'm aware of among former students and staff of New Bedford High School, as well as residents who live in the neighborhood. The pace of remediation is not sufficient to address current health needs. It seems like more could be done now so that these health problems don't continue. I also think blood, fecal, and hair tests should be done to see if community members are or have been affected by lead or arsenic at Walsh Field.**

As discussed in the March 2011 PIP question response summary, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health/ Bureau of Environmental Health plans to conduct two public meetings in the late spring of 2011 to discuss the health studies that they have conducted: an afternoon session on indoor air, blood serum polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) data, and cancer incidence with regard to school personnel; and an evening presentation on cancer and serum PCB testing data in the Parker Street Waste Site neighborhood. The exact dates have not been set.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry hopes to present their health consultation for Walsh Field at the next PIP meeting.

- 2. Comment: New Bedford High School seems to be a common denominator in too many health issues. I want to see the Commissioner of Public Health for Massachusetts at the next meeting so we can address these issues. We need the appropriate state and federal officers here to address that cancer clusters and the illnesses we have.**

The City will invite the Commissioner of Public Health to attend the next PIP meeting.

- 3. How can the surface water from the wetlands west of Keith Middle School be flowing north when the Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessment for New Bedford High School states that the groundwater flow is generally to the south? Surface water appears to be flowing south into the wetlands west of Keith Middle School rather than flowing north as the City says it does; could water flowing from the Sullivan's Ledge Superfund Site have contaminated (or still be contaminating) the wetlands west of Keith Middle School? Has the City identified any other sources of contamination for these wetlands?**

Surface water flow through the wetland is controlled by topography and the elevation of surface water in the wetland relative to the culvert that crosses Durfee Street. During wet periods (i.e., periods of rain and snowmelt), water flows into the wetland primarily through two mechanisms: direct runoff across the ground into the wetland and flow from storm water drains surrounding

the KMS that collect both runoff from paved areas surrounding the school and from the roof of KMS. Some runoff may collect in channels and be conveyed into the wetland. When water in the wetland rises above the elevation of the outfall of the culvert at the north end of the wetland crossing Durfee Street (the outfall appears to be at a higher elevation than the inlet), surface water flows through the culvert and along the channel north of Durfee Street into Apponagansett Swamp to the north. The wetland is approximately 15 feet higher in elevation as compared to the swamp, hence water flows downgradient into Apponagansett Swamp.

The southward movement of groundwater beneath the wetland and New Bedford High School can be explained based upon an understanding of groundwater flow systems. Groundwater is recharged primarily by precipitation infiltrating into the soil but can also occur through other mechanisms such as irrigating lawns. Significant recharge areas often occur along the highest points of a watershed boundary. As a result, groundwater is typically highest beneath the topographically higher areas of the watershed and groundwater flows from these areas to areas of lower elevation. One such probable recharge area is located along Rockdale Avenue west of the wetland. A large part of this area consists of unpaved soils and landscaped areas that would promote infiltration. This is consistent with higher groundwater elevations west of the wetland and a southeast to southerly flow direction towards the topographically lower parts of the watershed. Another topographically high area, similar to the area along Rockdale Avenue, is located northwest of the KMS wetland on the northwest side of the Route 140/Interstate 195 interchange. However, recharge in this area is likely contributing to the northeasterly groundwater flow direction at Sullivan's Ledge as noted in the EPA's Record of Decision for the Sullivan's Ledge Superfund Site, which states that, "on a regional scale, groundwater flow in the overburden, shallow bedrock and deep bedrock is to the north...". Due to these divergent groundwater flow patterns, groundwater from the Sullivan's Ledge Site is not flowing towards (and thus is not impacting) the wetland.

The City continues to evaluate the cause of the presence of contamination in the wetland; however, Sullivan's Ledge is not the source of the impacts.

- 4. Four other elementary schools in New Bedford were built around the same time as New Bedford High School (Pulaski, Carney Academy, Hayden-McFadden, and Gomes). Will the City of New Bedford be conducting similar sampling for polychlorinated biphenyls at these schools as they've done at NBHS?**

This question has been forwarded to the City's School Department for a response. The Environmental Stewardship Department will post the School Department's response when it is received.

- 5. Comment: I would like to see the Army Corps of Engineers, members of the City's Conservation Commission, and other key politicians attend PIP meetings to help answer questions.**

The City will invite representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers and the City's Conservation Commission to attend the next PIP meeting. Members of City Council and the School Committee have been present at many recent PIP meetings.

- 6. Is the City aware that they have been named as a potentially responsible party by the Environmental Protection Agency? (See the letter from Mr. Arthur Johnson, III, Chief, EPA Region 1 Emergency Planning and Response Branch, to City Solicitor Irene Schall dated September 29, 2010; the letter is included as part of EPA's Removal Action Administrative Record File and Index for the Parker Street Waste Site, which became available in January 2011.)**

EPA sent a letter to the City entitled "Notice of Potential Liability and Invitation to Perform or Finance Proposed Cleanup Activities for the Parker Street Waste Site, New Bedford, MA." In this letter, EPA notified the City of the City's potential liability regarding the Parker Street Waste Site, and notified the City of EPA's planned removal activities, which the City was invited to perform or finance.

- 7. Comment: By the next PIP meeting, I would like to see the City provide a timeframe for when the City Yard (located east of Walsh Field) will be tested.**

The City does not currently have a timeframe for testing the City Yard, and will not be able to provide a timeframe by the next PIP meeting. However, the City is aware of its responsibility to delineate the nature and extent of contamination of the Parker Street Waste Site and to show whether it is appropriate to include the City Yard within the site boundaries.

- 8. The Environmental Protection Agency has said that the Parker Street Waste Site now includes 114 acres. Does the City agree with EPA's position?**

No, the City disagrees with EPA's position.