

## Moretown Development Review Board

### Minutes of DRB Hearing Held November 13, 2012

Members of the Board present: Erick Titrud; John Riley; Jim O'Neill; Raymond Munn; David Russo

#### Continued Application of Moretown Landfill for Cell 4

The Board again met at the Moretown Town Hall with the hearing convening at 6:30 PM.

Tonight's meeting is to review the issue of odors associated with the current landfill operation, and proposed expansion. Prior to consideration of that issue, Tom Badowski presented a scaled exhibit made of wood which depicts the proposed landfill operation, and has a removable cap representing the eventual mound which would represent completed Cell 4 in all phases.

Tom Badowski also made a statement that based upon input from parties, the Applicant will submit a revised site plan which reorients the facility access road further to the east, and away from the Grow Compost and residential properties westerly of the landfill. The anticipated revision will also relocate the scale house and residential trash drop off/recycling operations easterly, and result in retention of existing trees along the westerly border of the landfill property. Mr. Badowski stated the applicant was working on revised plans and believed they could be submitted prior to the next hearing November 20.

Brian Beaudoin, an employee of Sanborn-Head then proceeded to make a presentation about odors associated with landfills. There are several causes of odors associated with landfill operations. There is landfill gas which results from decomposition of organic material which has been placed in the landfill. This is primarily methane which is an odorless gas, but associated with the breakdown there are other sulfur compound gases which are associated with unpleasant odors. Odors can also be associated with leachate; placement of biosolids in the facility; as well as municipal solid waste.

There is an existing gas collection system in use for Cell 3, and a similar collection system is proposed for Cell 4. A series of horizontal gas collectors are installed as the landfill is built up with vertical gas collection pipes used to syphon the landfill gases to a collection system. The system transfers the gases to a landfill gas to energy facility operated by Pennsylvania Power and Light and which generates approximately 3.2 megawatts of electricity. According to the Applicant, the facility has had an approximately 96% run time. If the energy facility is shut down for operational or other reasons the collected gases are diverted to a flame which burns them into the atmosphere.

On a monthly basis, the landfill property is monitored for methane concentrations, and the Cell 3 area is monitored biweekly. The federal monitor limit is 500 parts per million at the landfill surface. The State of Vermont requires a more stringent 50 parts per million. If a location is found to exceed the limit, the facility operator attempts to determine the cause and implement any obvious remedy such as increasing cover material. Once a location exceeds the limit it must be monitored weekly until resolved, which is defined as a below 50 part per million reading at least two weeks in a row.

The landfill makes biweekly and monthly reports to the State of Vermont, including any findings of exceeded limits, and actions taken in response.

The standard monitoring technique is use of a flame ionization detector which detects methane levels, as methane is the highest percentage of landfill gases, and the detectors offer a standard measuring protocol.

Mr. Beaudoin also discussed other sources of landfill odors including the collection of leachate, and placement of biosolids, and municipal solid waste. Tom Badowski discussed methods Moretown Landfill uses to stockpile cover material to promptly cover odor causing biosolids and deliveries from customers of MSW which has been previously associated with odors.

Comments from neighbors in the audience spoke to recurrent and persistent incidents where landfill odors are both noticeable and an irritant at their residential locations. Martha Douglas noted that although the science and techniques associated with efforts to cope with landfill odors appears impressive, the landfill has not been able to adequately address the concern, given the volume and extent of neighbor complaints and violation notices issued by the State of Vermont.

Beginning in August 2011 the landfill initiated an odor complaint response program. The program was developed by Weston & Sampson, an engineering firm, in consultation with Moretown Landfill and State of Vermont. Duane Hinds of Weston & Sampson described the program. Residents within 3/4 mile of the landfill property were notified about the program and provided phone and email contacts with which to lodge odor complaints. An employee of Weston & Sampson is always on call to respond and investigate the complaint. An odor complaint response log is developed which notes the complaint, and what was found upon investigation. Technicians are trained to evaluate the strength of the odors, and to characterize them as being associated with landfill gas, landfill trash, biosolids, or other sources. One of the technicians who investigates complaints is present. Ben Green described the protocols and methodology used in investigating complaints. A graph was produced showing the types of complaints and the extent to which they were confirmed by an investigating technician. The graph showed complaints significantly increasing in the July 1, 2012 - September 30, 2012 quarter.

Although not all complaints could be verified, this does not mean strong odors did not exist at the time a complaint was lodged. Either a delay in investigation, shifting of winds, or other factors could explain the inability to verify a complaint. Mr. Badowski also expressed an opinion that multiple complaints may be associated with a single event. He also noted issues are exacerbated during the warm summer months, and the fact the landfill is operating near the top of Cell 3 such that quickly covering and controlling odorous loads is more difficult than at the base of a cell.

Martha Douglas submitted several copies of a spreadsheet documenting the date, time, and caller for 181 odor complaints between August 5, 2011 and November 9, 2012.

Because of a lack of time, the Board did not have an opportunity to allow neighboring members present to speak about the impact of landfill odors on their properties and quality of life. At the continued meeting of the Board on November 20, the issue of odor will be continued to allow evidence to be presented by the neighbors.

A motion was made to continue the Board's consideration of this application to Tuesday, November 20 at 6:30 PM at the town hall. The motion was duly seconded and adopted by the Board and the matter is continued to that date and time.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. Riley".

John P. Riley  
Acting Clerk