

JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH AND WELFARE

Community Board Ten

January 12, 2006

Present:

Environmental: Fran Vella-Marrone, Greg Ahl, Gloria Melnick, Mary Nolan, Joanne Seminara, Larry Stelter
Health and Welfare: Harriet Rosenberg, Robert Buonvino, Judith Collins, Jeannie May, Gloria Melnick, Joanne Seminara,

Absent:

Environmental: Elaine Guido, Stella Kokolis
Health and Welfare: Michael Casale, Husam Rimawi

Excused:

Environmental: Anna DeMetz, Judith Grimaldi
Health and Welfare: Ruth Berg

Ex-Officio: Craig Eaton, CB 10 Chairman

A combined quorum was present.

Guests Present: Josephine Beckman (CB 10 District Manager), Dean Rasinya (CB 10 Vice Chairman), Kate Carberry (Rep. Senator Golden), Dan Kass (Dept.of Health and Mental Hygiene), John Petito (DEP), Lillie Farrell (DEP), Frank Loncar (DEP), Bill Grander (DEP, Owls Head Plant Manager), Emanuel Jalonschi (Brooklyn Papers)

The meeting commenced at 7:10 PM and closed at 8:30 PM.

Meeting Location: Community Board Ten Office, 621 86 Street, Brooklyn, NY.

The meeting was held to address the following:

- 1) Provide the Community Board with an update on the upcoming projects at the Owls Head Pollution Plant
- 2) Health risks of the emissions from Owls Head Pollution Plant
- 3) The 311 system as it relates to Owls Head Pollution Plant.
- 4) Flooding issues on Narrows Avenue & Colonial Road from 75th to 89th Streets.

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Representatives from the DEP provided an update on the upcoming capital project at the Owls Head Pollution Plant, the modifications to the Grit and Scum Building which will include a three-story addition that will allow for a new container storage area. The modifications will allow for a completely enclosed grit and scum handling operation and provide odor control in designated areas of operation. This project was first brought to our attention approximately two years ago and the project has been delayed. However, the committees were informed that a contract was awarded and DEP is expecting an order to commence work sometime in late winter. We were also informed that air resources personnel will do air modeling of the emissions upon the completion of the project.

The issue of installing covers on the primary, aeration and setting tanks was approached. The committees were informed by DEP that when the plant was built in 1951 the aeration tanks were in a building. This building became dilapidated and was taken down. The tanks were removed and new tanks were installed without any covering. The members of the committees questioned as to why other plants have these tanks covered. When specifically questioning the Coney Island Plant which has similar size tanks to that of Owls Head, the committees were informed that when a capital project was done for the Coney Island Plant an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was done and it was determined as a result of the EIS that the tanks would be covered. An EIS was conducted for the last capital project at Owls Head, however, no determination regarding covering the tanks was established. DEP informed the committees that an EIS is kicked off as a result of any capital project. Although the Owls Head Plant will have an upcoming capital project with regard to the Grit and Scum building, it was determined that an EIS was not necessary for this project. It was the sense of both committees that a new EIS should be conducted at Owls Head. In addition, it was the sense of the Environmental Committee that we study the upgrades at the Coney Island Plant and see if it would be possible to obtain the same for Owls Head. It was also the sense of the committees that the Board should continue to push for the covering of the tanks.

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A representative from the Department of Health addressed the health risk associated with the emissions from the Owls Head Plant. The committees were informed that the emissions are made up of Hydrogen Sulfide and ammonia and that a very low level is produced by the plant and that there is no health risk at this level. However, Bronchial and asthma conditions could be exacerbated. Although the foul odors do affect our quality of life, we were informed that they do not contain carcinogens and are not a health risk. When the Health Committee Chair approached the issue of high cancer rates for Bay Ridge as reported by the American Cancer Society, the Health Department Representative disputed those claims. The Health Committee plans to hold a meeting regarding this matter and will invite representatives from both the NYC Health Department and the American Cancer Society.


The DEP stated that regular air samples are taken to keep track of the emissions at the Owls Head Plant. If emission levels are higher than acceptable, the plant management will use best practice measures and make changes in the process. This is also done when they receive an odor complaint.

With regard to the 311 system, the Environmental Committee expressed concern regarding the time delay for complaints to reach the Owls Head Plant. Although the problem with regard to identifying the location of the Owls Head plant has been resolved, the complaints are not reaching the plant on a timely basis or in some case at all. This has been an ongoing problem and the Board has been requesting a resolution to this problem for over a year. The DEP representative said that she will look into the matter and get back to us. In addition, the Environmental Committee asked for a print out of the calls to 311 regarding the Owls Head Plant.

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The DEP addressed the matter pertaining to flooding on Narrows Avenue and Colonial Road from 75th to 89th Street. The Environmental Committee was informed that the catch basins will be cleaned. In addition, Community board 10 has made a request for larger and improved catch basins. The DEP representative stated that the request is being studied. The committee asked that the DEP to get back to us with a timeframe regarding the study and requested that the catch basins be cleaned more frequently while the DEP conducts its study.

Respectfully submitted,



Frances T. Vella-Marrone
Chairwoman
Environmental Committee
Community Board Ten