

USEPA AMCO Superfund Site CAG Meeting, February 23, 2010

EPA Attendees: Leana Rosetti
Rose Marie Caraway
Steve Calanog
Nick Vargas
Janice Witul

EPA Contractors: Yash Nyznyk/CDM
Kent Baugh/ITSI
Frankie Burton/CH2M HILL

CAG Members: Bradley Angel/Green Action
Brent Bucknum
Brian Beveridge
Danielle Emmet
David Roach/WOSA
Graham Prentice
Harlan Smith/WOSA
Jessica Trowbridge/UC Berkeley student
John Schweizer /Technical Assistant
Keba Konte/WOSA
Khayyam Petlway/UC Berkeley student
Margaret Gordon
Monsa Nitoto/Coalition for West Oakland Revitalization
Samson Mael/WOSA
Shean Sullivan
Tanya Parker

- EPA provided background information on the AMCO Superfund site to four members of West Oakland Sustainable Alliance (WOSA) prior to the start of the meeting.

West Oakland Residential Lead Assessment Update

EPA Presentation/Information

- Steve Calanog/EPA provided some background information (for new CAG members) about himself and EPA's Emergency Response department.
- Background information:
 - EPA initiated an expanded investigation of the neighborhood in September, 2009.
 - EPA sampled 50 yards in the fall of 2009.
 - The samples showed that lead levels in South Prescott yards are more than double EPA's "safe" level.
 - Steve Calanog/EPA proposed to his management that they remediate the yards as soon as possible.
 - If EPA were to remove the soil they would have to remove approximately 35,000 cubic yards of soil.
 - EPA is considering other options, because removal is expensive and simply moving the problem somewhere else.
 - Steve Calanog/EPA and Janice/EPA have been directed to perform a historical investigation of possible sources, which will help EPA make their final decision about how to proceed.

Public/Technical Advisor Comments

- What do you mean when you say you're waiting to get the green light to proceed? Do you mean proceed with the removal of lead contaminated soil?
 - To proceed with the clean up, and whether or not the method of cleanup will be removing the soil.
- (Green Action) Didn't EPA already decide to remove the soil?
 - EPA is definitely going to fix the problem, but they have not made a decision as to how they will remediate the soil.
- (Green Action) Were any of the residents growing gardens in lead contaminated yards?
 - EPA sampled gardens and informed the residents of the high lead levels.
 - EPA has historically and recently recommended that residents wash any food grown in their yards thoroughly or don't eat it at all due to the risk.
- The community would like to see EPA provide green jobs for residents either in cleaning up lead contaminated soil or in cleaning up the AMCO Superfund Site.
 - EPA has considered and is not against providing green jobs when remediating the neighborhood's lead contaminated soil and AMCO Superfund Site.
 - EPA has received input from a number of residents regarding their preference for cleaning up lead contaminated soil:
 - Some residents want their yards to be paved over.
 - Some residents are interested in more sustainable solutions such as phytoremediation, which is a method of remediation that uses plants to remove contaminants from the soil.
 - With phytoremediation, success is a function of the percentage of planted material that is in contact with the contaminated soil.
 - Phytoremediation alone results in a 15–30% reduction of contaminant levels, but in conjunction with other remediation methods phytoremediation is much more effective at removing contamination.
 - It should be noted that phytoremediation takes more time to remove contamination than other remediation technologies.
 - Ultimately EPA will select the option that can be implemented in a reasonable amount of time and is economically feasible and best protects human health and the environment.
- The residents suggest that EPA use appropriate parcels (empty lots, households without children or elderly) for pilot studies to determine how well phytoremediation works in the South Prescott neighborhood.
 - EPA is open to phytoremediation pilot studies if property owners agree to participate.
- A resident wanted to clarify that there isn't a universal plan for all homes with lead contaminated soil.
 - That's understood and EPA never suggested that there is a universal plan for all homes.
- Phytoremediation can act like a cap, similar to a cement layer, which could prevent lead in the soil from escaping into the homes. Phytoremediation would also improve the local air quality, whereas digging and hauling using trucks could degrade local air quality. Phytoremediation provides an opportunity for local, sustainable employment, because it has to be maintained over time.
- There are many issues regarding lead contamination in yards that EPA must consider. Some of the main issues are
 - (1) leaving lead for future property owners to deal with and/or be exposed to;
 - (2) preventing runoff if cement caps are used and
 - (3) decreasing a resident's property value when their yard is identified as having lead contaminated soil, before EPA cleans it up.
 - Steve Calanog/EPA offered to do a lead cleanup focused meeting to further discuss the community's concerns and ideas.
 - He suggested that the CAG speak with John Schweizer /Technical Assistant, because he has been in communication with Steve Calanog/EPA.
- A resident asked if we're discussing just the AMCO Superfund Site or cleaning up lead contamination in the South Prescott neighborhood?

- EPA explained that they're using the CAG meeting forum to discuss two separate projects that effect the same residents:
 - (1) The EPA *Emergency Response Lead Investigation* in South Prescott (between 7th Street and 3rd Street, Mandela Parkway and Peralta Street).
 - (2) The EPA AMCO *Superfund Site Environmental Investigation*.
- EPA's response to multiple questions posed by the community:
 - EPA wants to look at how they can reduce their impact when cleaning up the AMCO Superfund Site. EPA's plans range from small scale operations, such as running equipment on bio fuels to larger scale sustainable practices. They're especially careful not to further contaminate the AMCO Superfund Site while cleaning it up.
 - EPA has considering providing local green jobs to the community on the *Emergency Response Lead Investigation* and the *Superfund Site Environmental Investigation* projects.
 - EPA could always use volunteers from the community to spread the word about the project, community meetings and opportunities to provide input. EPA can not accept volunteers for work that involves exposure to contamination, unless the staff is properly trained (i.e., HAZMAT training) in advance. People with this training would be paid for their work.
- Brian Beveridge/CAG co-chair, suggested that the public come up with a list of discussion topics for the *Emergency Response Lead Investigation* and the *Superfund Site Environmental Investigation* projects. Listing concerns in advance is more productive than having a random discussion at the CAG meetings. It is important that residents connect the CAG to other West Oakland re/development organizations and remind/encourage their neighbors to come to and be involved in future CAG meetings and activities.
- When will the CAG see the 2009 indoor air sampling results?
 - As soon as EPA can provide the data to the CAG without infringing upon residents' privacy.
 - There is no immediate risk to residents.
- Green Action thinks that the data should be released immediately, because the residents deserve to know what their risk is considering the neighborhood's poor air quality.
 - There is red tape that EPA must deal with to legally release the data to the public. They must provide the data to and gain permission of residents whose home the data came from prior to releasing it to the public.
 - Typically the data the CAG is requesting is released to the public in the final document, such as the Feasibility Study. In this case, EPA is willing to release the data prior to the release of the Feasibility Study. However, EPA can not release data about someone's property without their knowledge and permission.
- EPA must understand that the West Oakland community has had a difficult time working with EPA in the past and will continue to question the process. EPA's staff is coming off as combative, which results in the community being combative as well. The residents suggest that EPA does not become combative with the community, because things would get done faster and more smoothly.
- The community has to determine what resources EPA has and work with them to ensure progress is made. It is not useful to attack EPA or place unrealistic demands on them, because that will waste time.

TASC Technical Assistance Needs Assessment

EPA Discussion

- EPA planned to review the TASC Technical Assistance Needs Assessment with the CAG.

Public/Technical Advisor Comments

- Suggests that EPA hold a separate meeting to review the TASC Technical Assistance Needs Assessment, because the residents received the document on the same day as the meeting. The public needs to be able to review and digest the document prior to providing input.
 - EPA agrees that the residents should have an opportunity to thoroughly review the TASC Technical Assistance Needs Assessment.

- EPA was pushing along the approval of the TASC Technical Assistance Needs Assessment, because it would be a way to ensure the community has a technical advisor as soon as possible. The alternative route is to find a local non profit to take on the Technical Assistance Grant, which is a much more time consuming route.
- Community groups and local contractors should be used on the project as much as possible. E2's presentation was depressing for South Prescott residents, because they proposed to develop over people's homes. It's ok for them to get the ball rolling, but they should not pick or provide the technical assistant.
 - EPA is open to working with local community groups and non-profits. As soon as the previous TAG grant is officially terminated, groups are encouraged to apply for a new one. TASC can also subcontract local contractors that the community recommends.
- EPA should put the meeting notes, handouts, presentations, etc. on the EPA AMCO Superfund Site website for new CAG members to review prior to the CAG meetings.
 - EPA understands the request and decided to upload the meeting notes as well as other relevant documents to the EPA AMCO Superfund Site website: www.epa.gov/region09/amco
 - EPA would like to see the CAG take more ownership over the CAG. Suggests that the community develop a Google Group, website, newsletter or some other way to communicate and disseminate important information to the community.
- The community would do this if they had time but need assistance.
 - The TASC could be used to help the community with things like laying out and distributing their newsletters, or maintaining a website.
- The public requests a historical briefing document (from EPA) for new members to use to catch up on what has been covered in previous CAG meetings. It could be a summary of the meeting notes.
- The CAG needs to have a workshop to determine committees and strategies to accomplish their goals.
 - The CAG should have a meeting protocol, which should be followed at all CAG meetings by all members.
- How come the South Prescott community can not take advantage of the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Program?
 - The CARE Program is part of the Brownfields department of EPA. The CARE program is similar to and inspired by the TAG program, but is not related to Superfund.
- Potential CAG committees include the following...
 1. TASC Technical Assistance Needs Assessment
 2. *Emergency Response Lead Investigation*
 3. Applying for a TAG
 4. Developing a community-driven process and strategy for decision making and collaboration with EPA

Temporary/Permanent Relocation Guidance

- Due to time constraints and lack of attendees directly affected, this topic will be discussed at a future CAG meeting.

Second Round of Indoor Air Sampling

- Due to time constraints and lack of attendees directly affected, this topic will be discussed at a future CAG meeting.

Remedial Alternatives, Green Remediation Ideas/Possibilities

- Due to time constraints, this topic will be discussed at the next CAG meeting.

Remedy Review Board Process

- Due to time constraints, this topic will be discussed at a future CAG meeting.

Community Advisory Group – March 15, 2010 Agenda

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

- Lead cleanup and green remediation ideas – Brent Bucknum, Steve Calanog, John Schweizer
- TASC technical assistance needs assessment: priorities and community suggestions for how to carry out work – Leana Rosetti