

Newhall Remediation Project

A newsletter provided by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

This first issue of the Newhall Remediation Project newsletter highlights efforts underway that will lead to the cleanup of contamination in the Newhall neighborhood.

Published on a quarterly basis, the newsletter will allow readers to follow the status of various cleanup activities taking place in the neighborhood. In each issue you will find regular updates on the project, notices of upcoming meetings and activities, and general information including the site's history, remediation plans and contact information.

Besides the newsletter, DEP will be providing other opportunities to learn about the project. A website, a local information and outreach office and a repository of important project documents at local Hamden libraries will be established. I urge you to stay informed, ask questions, and work with us to assure the successful remediation of the Newhall neighborhood.

- Arthur J. Rocque, Jr., Commissioner

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WHAT IS THE NEWHALL REMEDIATION PROJECT?

Following the discovery of contamination problems at the Hamden Middle School in late 2000, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Quinnipiac Valley Health District and the Connecticut Department of Public Health have been working to understand the extent of the pollution and what should be done about it.

From the late 1800s through the 1950s, industrial and domestic waste was used to fill old swamps in the Newhall neighborhood to eliminate mosquitoes. Once the swamps were filled, the land was developed for houses, businesses, the Middle School and nearby parks. Much of the waste that was dumped in the Newhall area contains pollutants such as lead and arsenic. In the Newhall Remediation Project, the extent of the pollution resulting from the waste will be determined and cleaned up. To accomplish this, a consent order was



signed by the parties responsible for the pollution in the Newhall neighborhood. DEP is responsible for overseeing the consent order requirements and for making sure the final site cleanup meets the State's strict standards. The consent order also specifies what parts of the neighborhood each responsible party has to investigate.

Olin Corporation - Non- public properties, including residential

areas surrounding the Middle School and parks.

The Regional Water Authority - Hamden Middle School and two adjacent residential properties.

The Town of Hamden - Rochford Field, Mill Rock Park, the Hamden Community Center, and the sewer pump station.

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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM DEVELOPED TO GIVE COMMUNITY A VOICE IN CLEANUP OF NEWHALL NEIGHBORHOOD

"Community involvement must be and will be a major component to this project and we look forward to working closely with the outreach team that has been assembled," said DEP Commissioner Arthur J. Rocque, Jr.

As a first step to ensuring public involvement throughout the investigation and remediation process at the Newhall site, the DEP has assembled a public outreach team that consists of a Public Involvement Coordinator, a Community Facilitator, and a Community Advocate.

In April 2003, the DEP included the public participation process for the investigation and cleanup of the Newhall Street neighborhood in a consent order issued by the DEP to the parties responsible for undertaking the cleanup. The public involvement process was established to keep the community informed of all phases of the cleanup project and provide a forum for the public to comment on each component of the cleanup. To move the process forward, the DEP has assembled the following public outreach team:

Public Involvement Coordinator – The DEP has hired the firm of Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. of Hartford to serve as the Department's public involvement coordinator. Fitzgerald & Halliday will implement and coordinate all aspects of the public participation process.

Community Facilitator – Health Risk Consultants, Inc. of Fairfield has been selected by the community to serve as its facilitator. Health Risk Consultants, as the community facilitator, will work closely with residents from the Newhall Street neighborhood to obtain and distribute cleanup information and coordinate the public's response throughout the cleanup process. Health Risk Consultants was previously involved with contamination issues at the Hamden Middle School.

Community Advocate – To assist the community,

the Newhall Coalition will be hired as the Community Advocate. Ms. Elizabeth Hayes of the Newhall Coalition will assist in the dissemination of information to the community throughout the cleanup and help ensure that the community's concerns are clearly understood and considered by the DEP throughout the course of the project. Ms. Hayes lives in the Newhall Street neighborhood and had been an active member of the former Community Advisory Panel.

In addition to the public outreach team that has been assembled, the DEP and the community groups will work closely with the responsible parties, including the Town of Hamden, and local legislators. State Representative Peter Villano has played an active role in efforts to establish the public involvement process.

Components to the public involvement process include:

- Quarterly **informational meetings** to update the public on the latest developments,
- The launching of a project **web site**, www.newhallinfo.org
- The creation of project **fact sheets**,
- The establishment of **document repositories** at the Hamden Library, 2901 Dixwell Avenue, and at the Whitneyville Branch Library, corner of Putnam Avenue and Carleton Street.
- DEP hopes to open an environmental **information and public outreach office** in the community. Stay tuned...

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON WORK PLAN FOR MORE TESTING IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Development of a plan to complete the investigation of contamination at residential properties in the Newhall neighborhood is expected to move forward this month.

Olin Corporation has submitted to DEP a revised work plan for the testing of residential properties in the Newhall remediation project site.

The Olin work plan addresses the first of the three portions of the site. This plan was presented to the public for review at a meeting on January 22 at the Keefe Community Center at 7 PM. In addition, an open house will be held on Saturday, February 28 (location to be determined) where DEP will answer questions and take comments on the work

plan and environmental technicians will demonstrate testing procedures.

Copies of the Olin work plan are available for review at the Hamden Library, 2901 Dixwell Avenue, and at the Whitneyville Branch Library, corner of Putnam Avenue and Carleton Street. The work plan is also available for review at the DEP File Room, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, and can be reserved by calling (860) 424-3546.

DEP will welcome questions and comments on the Olin work plan until mid-March when it will make a final decision on whether to approve the work plan. Written comments should be addressed to Shannon Windisch Pociu, Remediation Section, Department of Environmental



Soil samples are expected to be taken as part of the investigation. This photo shows soil sampling conducted in 2002 at the Middle School. Photo courtesy of Leggette, Brashears & Graham, Inc.

Protection, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106.

Once DEP approves the work plan, investigation can start to determine the full extent and degree of contamination so that cleanup methods can be evaluated and selected. Investigation may take up to 14

months, and the evaluation and cleanup of the residential properties could be completed within three to five years.

In order to move the investigation along as quickly as possible, DEP asks that property owners cooperate with Olin's request to provide access for testing.

WHAT IS THE NEWHALL REMEDIATION PROJECT?

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The entire area consisting of the Hamden Middle School, Community Center, the parks, and surrounding residential properties is the subject of the Newhall Remediation Project. The project timeline will be a long process that first involves collecting

much soil and groundwater data to understand where the waste is located and what is in it. Only then can the DEP, responsible parties, and the community together look at what clean up options are appropriate. After taking into

consideration the concerns of the community, DEP will approve cleanup remedies and the cleanup will begin.

Where are we now?

Olin Corp. has proposed a plan for

investigating the waste on the residential portion of the site. DEP has hired a community facilitator and will be hiring Ms. Elizabeth Hayes of the Newhall Coalition to assist in disseminating information to the community.



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We're on the web!
www.newhallinfo.org

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OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULED FOR NEWHALL REMEDIATION PROJECT

An open house
will be held on
SATURDAY
February 28
from 10-3 pm
(location to be
determined)
in Hamden.

Connecticut
Department of
Environmental
Protection (DEP)
staff will be
available to answer
questions and take
comments on the
work plan for more
testing in residential
areas.

The public is invited
to view displays and
speak individually
with representatives
from the DEP.

Examples of testing
equipment used for
testing will be on
display.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection will publish this newsletter on a quarterly basis. If you would like to be on the mailing list or have suggestions for topics in future issues, please contact Jill Barrett, (860) 570-0740, jbarrett@fhiplan.com



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