

Newhall Remediation Project

A newsletter provided by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

NEWHALL COMMUNITY LEARNS ABOUT PROPOSED PLAN TO STUDY CONTAMINATION

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This publication is the second issue of a quarterly newsletter that will be published by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to inform the public about what's happening to examine and clean up pollution in the Newhall area of Hamden. The DEP has been working since late 2000 to understand the full extent of contamination problems caused by dumping industrial and household wastes 50-100 years ago.

Beginning in late January, residents of the Newhall neighborhood have been learning about plans to complete the study of contamination at residences, also called the "non-public properties" part of the Newhall site.

About 100 people attended a public meeting at the Keefe Community Center on January 24, 2004 to get an update on the project to test for

contamination in the Newhall neighborhood.

Ken Cichon, an engineer from Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. hired by Olin Corporation, detailed a proposed work plan to test residential properties for contamination. Mr. Cichon fielded dozens of questions from the audience throughout an hour-long presentation of the plan. Olin Corporation is responsible for investigating

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Ken Cichon of Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. answers questions about Olin Corp's proposed testing in the neighborhood. (Open House February 28)

HEALTH DEPARTMENT RELEASES FINDINGS FOR SOILS IN NEWHALL RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH) has reviewed soil sampling results in the Newhall Street neighborhood to determine whether the landfill waste in residential soils is a public health hazard. Based on this data, CTDPH has written a draft Public Health Assessment, and concluded that based on

current conditions and available data, no apparent public health hazard currently exists. CTDPH will hold an Open House at the Keefe Center April 13, 3-9 PM, to answer questions and receive comments on the draft.

The assessment looked at environmental sampling data, the concerns of the

neighborhood, and health information about the community. It built on the results of three other CTDPH documents that looked at landfill waste and health concerns at the Hamden Middle School, two nearby town parks and the Newhall Street School.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH OFFICE TO OPEN AT KEEFE CENTER

“ Having a community office will give people a place to meet and learn what's happening with this project, ”

*Elizabeth Hayes,
Community Advocate*

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will open a community outreach office at the Keefe Center on Dixwell Avenue, between Pine and George streets. The office will be open to the public to review



project documents, to obtain information on latest project developments, hold meetings and provide office space for the project's Community Advocate, Ms. Elizabeth Hayes of the Newhall Coalition, Inc.

Ms. Elizabeth Hayes and other representatives of the Newhall Coalition, Inc. have been hired by the DEP to help the community understand what is happening throughout the project and help ensure that the community's concerns are clearly understood and considered by the DEP. Ms. Hayes lives in the Newhall Street neighborhood and was an active member of the former Community Advisory Panel. Ms. Hayes and others will provide information on office hours and will be available to answer questions at the Keefe Center for the April 27 public meeting.

GROWING AND EATING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE NEWHALL NEIGHBORHOOD OF HAMDEN

Many people have asked whether it is safe to grow and eat fruits and vegetables in their yards. The Connecticut Department of Public Health has published a fact sheet that provides guidelines to prevent exposure to chemicals from gardening in the neighborhood.

Here are some of the tips:

- **Use raised beds with new topsoil**
- **Grow more fruiting crops (such as tomatoes, squash and beans) and fewer root (potatoes, beets, etc.) and leafy green (lettuce, spinach, etc.) crops**
- **Avoid eating and drinking while working in the garden**
- **Wash hands and work clothes after gardening; leave shoes at the door**
- **Wash produce before eating it; soak and rinse leafy greens; scrub and peel root vegetables**

Copies of the complete fact sheet are available at www.newhallinfo.org or by calling the CTDPH at (860) 509-7742.

COMMUNITY LEARNS OF PLAN (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

this area of the Newhall neighborhood.

In late February, 35 residents participated in a follow-up Open House meeting. Attendees could browse nearly a dozen tables with displays that included a list of properties proposed for testing, examples of testing equipment that will be used, information on health issues, structural testing and community advocacy. One table had a computer to show people how to use the project website.

Testing equipment at the Open House included soil sampling tubes and hand-held screening tools including XRF (X-ray fluorescence) and PID (photo-ionization detector), tools used to test soil for metals and volatile organic compounds such as benzene. Equipment used for testing groundwater samples from monitoring wells was also set up.

Testing will be done on residential properties to determine the exact limits of former landfill areas. The work plan also calls for testing of groundwater and bare soil spots to see if contamination is present.

302 properties will be included in the investigation, as long as property owners grant access by signing a permission form. Properties will receive a visual inspection and/or testing.

DEP sponsored the public programs to give the public an opportunity to ask questions, make comments and raise any concerns they may have about the testing plan.

Elsie Patton, Director of Planning & Standards in the DEP's Bureau of Waste Management, told residents that her department would not approve the work plan until the public had a chance to review it and make comments.

At the public sessions, residents expressed concern that testing might damage the foundation of their homes and asked who would repair lawns if damage was done. They wondered whether their drinking water was safe or if their yards were safe to use. (Drinking water is piped in from reservoirs in nearby towns, *so the water is safe to drink.*)

A more complete list of questions and answers from the public meetings can be found on the project website

www.newhallinfo.org

and at document repositories at the following locations:

Miller Library

Whitneyville Branch Library

Community Office at the Keefe Center

DEP is expected to make a decision on the work plan by mid-April. DEP will choose one of the three options: 1. Accept the work plan as proposed, 2. Accept the plan with modifications, or 3. Ask Olin Corporation to make a new plan.

Because of concern raised by homeowners at past meetings, DEP is planning to assess the structural condition of houses built on top of landfill areas. As plans are finalized, homeowners will be contacted by DEP or its consultant, Loureiro Engineering Associates, Inc.

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The assessment recognized that neighborhood residents could be exposed to landfill contaminants through contact with contaminated soil while working or playing in their yards (eating soil, skin contact, breathing in soil particles). Residents will not be exposed to landfill contaminants buried below the ground surface unless they dig into the soil.

CTDPH recommends that residents reduce exposure to soils in the neighborhood and has prepared fact sheets entitled

What Can I Do To Reduce My Exposure to Soil in My Yard? and ***Growing and Eating Fruits and Vegetables in the Newhall Neighborhood of Hamden.***

CTDPH will evaluate new sampling data as it becomes available and will update the assessment if needed. Copies are available for review at the Whitneyville and Miller Libraries and on the project's website.

For questions about the Public Health Assessment, contact Meg Harvey of the CTDPH at (860) 509-7742.



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

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PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR NEWHALL REMEDIATION PROJECT

A public meeting will be held on

Agenda

**Tuesday, April 27 from
6:30-8:30 pm***

**At the Keefe Community
Center**

**Dixwell Avenue (between Pine
and George Streets).**

*DEP and project staff will be
available talk with public
beginning at 6 PM.

DEP will present its decision on
the Olin Corporation's
proposed Work Plan to test
residential properties for
contamination.

In addition, the Regional Water
Authority will present a
proposed Work Plan for
additional testing at the
Hamden Middle School and
athletic fields.

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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