

IESI Bethlehem Landfill Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2014
Time: 1:00 PM
Location: Lower Saucon Township Council Meeting Room
Attendance: Donna Louder & Hazem Hijazi, Landfill Committee Members; Al Schleyer, IESI; Chris Taylor, Hanover Engineering, Host Municipal Inspector; Priscilla deLeon, Council Liaison; Diane Palik, Administrative Assistant; Mr. Jack Cahalan, Township Manager.

Mr. Schleyer said tonnages for April were as follows: MSW – 24,130.4 tons; C&D – 3,688.3 tons; Residual – 6,024.6 tons; Asbestos - 73.6%; Out of state – 22,330.7 tons (66%); Recycling – 3.0 tons (77% from LST); Number of trucks – 2,841. Mrs. deLeon said all the amounts went up. Why did residual wastes go up? Mr. Schleyer said it varies and fluctuates from month to month with industries disposing of their wastes.

Mr. Jack Cahalan, Township Manager joined the meeting. Mr. Schleyer said they constructed an odor control spray line on the north and it's on the perimeter fencing on the north side, partly behind the MSE wall and leading up to the LST water tank. It's several hundred feet. It's a spray line that has misters on it and there's a water tank and a fragrance and odor control agent that gets blended together. It's carried over to the spray line by a pump and it comes out as a mist at the spray nozzles. If the pump is off, it's not going to do anything. It's something they are following through with their Nuisance Minimization Plan and they try to do whatever they can do minimize dust, litter, odor, noise, and all those kinds of things. Construction started last week and this past Tuesday afternoon is the first time they turned it on. The height is about 8' to 10' so it will carry over with the wind. It's like a mister similar to what a greenhouse would use.

Mr. Taylor said it doesn't seem to have an odor, just a slight odor that dissipates right away, not a heavy sweet perfume smell. Mr. Schleyer said they are using vanilla and grape scents. They are figuring it out if they want to run it 24/7 or the way the wind is, those kinds of issues. They are just putting it through a test run right now. The tank holds about 220 gallons. Everything related to it is manual, filling it, starting it up.

Mrs. deLeon said was this a request from DEP? Mr. Schleyer said no, they've used this at other landfills the company has and once they got through the winter, they decided to try it. They had a crew from another landfill set it up for them.

Mrs. deLeon said when we were at the water tank watching it spraying, approaching the MSE wall, they did smell a gas odor and trash. They drove in front of the wall, and saw this operation, and the cell where they are dumping the garbage. When they were leaving and approaching that side of the wall, they smelled three distinct odors, a gas odor, a leachate odor and a combined odor. Driving back, the trash odor was very prominent today. Standing close to the water tank, you couldn't smell anything.

Ms. Louder said her only concern is the tanks that hold the spray, they have warning notices. She wants to make sure this stuff that's in the tank isn't a chemical or flammable. Mr. Schleyer said it's a water soluble fragrance. If you look at any MSDS sheet it will have warnings on it like if you had one for salt, it would say don't throw it in your eyes.

Mr. Taylor asked what the proportion of the mixture was? Mr. Schleyer said he wasn't sure, but there are certain mixture rates they are going by. It's concentrated odor control so you put a little bit with a lot of water.

Going over the odor complaints, Mr. Taylor said the first one is a repeat from the last report on April 4th, two separate incidents at two different times on the same day. Mr. Schleyer said one was from Johnston Avenue and one from Ivywood. On April 28th a resident from Ringhoffer Road smelled an odor during the night. On April 29th a resident from Johnston Avenue said he had a strong odor at 11:13 pm. May 9th a resident from Mixell Road had intermittent garbage odors at 8:15 am and the same resident on May 13th at 8:30 am. The incident on May 9th, he and Mike Sheldon went and spoke to the person, but they didn't smell anything. The wind was coming from the east direction of the landfill area. They were there within 10 minutes and hung out and talked to the resident and didn't smell anything. Someone during the day will take the complaint and take the time, the address and the name.

Mrs. deLeon said can whoever takes the call, ask the people, if they can describe the odor. Does it smell like gas, garbage? People need to be educated. Mr. Cahalan said there's an odor descriptor wheel the residents could use to describe the odor. Ms Louder said she smelled a sweet pungent odor and that's when they said it was a leachate smell. It's better to say to them, explain what it smells like instead of putting ideas in their head. Let them tell you what it smells like.

Mrs. deLeon said there are many people in Steel City that aren't aware of what's going on or who to call if they smell an odor. The residents are going to get together and send out a flyer and educate the people on who to call. Ms. Louder said they aren't educated on who to call. It's on the Township's website, but not everybody in Steel City has a computer because a lot of them are in their 70's. Mr. Hijazi said aren't there multiple residents that smell this odor, why aren't they calling? There's only one incident on a given day. Ms. Louder said they say, oh well, they smell something. Mrs. deLeon said you wake up and are going to work, are all your neighbors waking up at that time to go outside or do they get up at various times to go to work. Her neighbors have all separate schedules and it depends which way the wind is blowing. The smell is like a whiff. Ms. Louder said a couple of weeks ago she called DEP, her neighbor called IESI and her other neighbor called DEP. It was all within two hours of each other but they all didn't know they each did it until they were out a couple days later and talked.

Mr. Schleyer said May 9th a resident was traveling on Saucon Avenue at the Narrows and smelled a gas odor. On May 10th, a resident and guest on Ivywood Avenue detected odors around lunch time. On May 13th same resident as May 9th detected garbage odors at 8:30 am from Mixell Avenue. He didn't go out to that house. Mr. Cahalan asked Mr. Schleyer to put down the street number on these complaints.

Mrs. deLeon said Friday afternoon she went through the Narrows and she went past the hill climb and was almost to the end of the fence and she smelled the gas. It was definitely methane gas. That was at 1:50 pm. She said to Mr. Cahalan the thing we approved is great, but she thinks DEP should be the first one called regardless of what the odor is as they are our regulatory agency. They need to know and we should revise that. So she called DEP and then called the landfill. Mr. Taylor was up there doing their inspection up by the water tank so they were up there when she called the odor in. They didn't smell gas or any odors. Why was she smelling it down below? DEP still has not called her back. Since then she got an email from a resident on Saucon Avenue, first time she opened up her windows at 3 am or 4am, she woke up to this rotten, gassy smell that actually made her sick. She called DEP. At 4 am she walks her dog and smells the gas in the morning. She thinks we should call both places. This way the DEP knows about it and IESI knows about it. Last night she did a sniff patrol and she wasn't even to the gate yet, and there's the smell from the east. She backed up and it was gone that fast. She got to the intersection of Shimersville and Applebutter Road and she was going to turn around at Praxair as they are one of the culprits as well as the sewage treatment plant. As soon as she made her left, there was the gas smell. It was coming under the bridge. She turned around, came back over, and did not smell the sewage treatment plant at 5:45 pm. Coming back into Steel City, she did not smell the gas. Today after leaving the landfill, she didn't smell it. Coming home, she stopped at the stop sign and she smelled it. On the map of Steel City, she'd like to put an x on all the people who smell an odor. We can circulate the flyer so people know. Call your legislators. This is not acceptable wherever it's coming from. Jack is stuck as DEP won't tell him who the people are. She met with people at Steel City Park last night and they smelled garbage and a gas smell. Two of the residents called, one about the garbage, one about the gas.

Mrs. deLeon said if we can get cooperation, she would hope they would call both places, DEP and IESI. Mr. Schleyer said they always follow up with the complaint. They have had people call during the night and they leave a message on the answering machine. Mrs. deLeon said the neighbor that woke up in the middle of the night with the gas odor and was nauseated should have called 9-1-1. She didn't know to do that. Mr. Hijazi said the odors from the landfill, the smell of garbage, wouldn't make her nauseated. It could be some other chemical in her house that made her feel like that. Mrs. deLeon said the sewage treatment plant has a distinct odor. She lives in Steel City since 1985 and has never smelled the sewage treatment plant in Steel City. Mr. Hijazi said the smell from the sewage treatment plant wouldn't make you nauseated either where you would have to go to the hospital.

Mrs. deLeon thinks Jack should consider changing our policy and having DEP called first and then the landfill. Mr. Cahalan said he has no problem with changing the order. Ms. Louder asked if the Township had the capability of creating a hotline. Mr. Cahalan said there are a variety of sites that the smell could be coming from. He doesn't know who to tell people to call. Mrs. deLeon said more people are finding out about it and saying what is that smell, what are we supposed to do. She gives them the DEP number to call. Mr. Hijazi said someone smells an odor, and IESI or DEP go there, then they don't smell it. He's not so sure how scientific people are going to put their finger on it. Mrs. deLeon said she smelled the same smell at the hill climb at BRE, she smelled it on site in the landfill and on Applebutter Road and Shimersville Road. Mr. Hijazi said this is all new? Mrs. deLeon said in the past two or three years ago. Mr. Hijazi said could it be BRE? Mrs. deLeon said maybe, they are on the map. Ms. Louder said when BRE was shut down, you did not smell it as the landfill flare was running. It was under control; and when BRE was up and down, absolutely 110%. If BRE was in operation, we had problems. When they went out of operation, the problem went away. That was something she watched. Mrs. deLeon said who knows if it isn't when a truck comes in and empties their storage tanks. There could be an odor coming from that, dumping them in the disposal truck. All the stuff that makes the sewage treatment plant work is confined in that area. They redid the bridge and she doesn't know what they did underneath. The leachate gets pumped into the sewer pipes and the sewer pipes run along Applebutter Road and then when they pass the sheep farm, there's a road that's closed off and they go to the left and they head towards the sewage treatment plant. They don't follow the Saucon Creek and those S-shaped curves on Applebutter Road, so what is underneath there that would smell like methane. The residents are not happy. There are children playing and running around in the yards. She asked Jack to please revise it and let her know when it's on the website then they can copy and paste it.

Mr. Cahalan will update the odor complaint list. On the back of the odor descriptors chart, the residents can fill it in and hand it in to DEP and IESI. Ms. Louder said BRE doesn't have the same regulations as IESI. Mrs. deLeon said Act 101 entitles us to get the waste everything from DEP. It does not entitle us to get air stuff, so if we stumble upon an air report, we're lucky. Who knows what air reports are going back and forth to BRE. Maybe that would be something to contact their higher ups and ask them to send us their last two years of and she wouldn't even know what to ask for. Mr. Hijazi said there should not be a problem with BRE. Mrs. deLeon said do you remember that NOV the Bethlehem Sewage Plant got slapped with. They shut down the Bethlehem Sewage Plant because of the odors coming from their product. If that same product is being produced everyday at BRE, and not being discharged down into the sewer anymore, it's being stored in temporary storage tanks, don't you think that odor is still there. Nobody seems to be answer that question. It's called condensate. We look at IESI with a magnifying glass. Nobody is watching BRE. They say they do this and that, but are they. Their temporary holding tanks they were only given a short time for that. Ms. Louder said the odor was blamed on them when they were emptying the tanks and forgot to put the lid back on. It's what's in those tanks. There are no regulations on them. Mrs. deLeon said we approve all these things but there's no oversight.

Mrs. deLeon said what could we put on the flyer for Steel City residents. If you smell, gas, leachate or garbage odors, but people aren't going to know what leachate is. Ms. Louder said she still thinks the Township should get an odor hotline. Mrs. deLeon said then you are asking people to call three numbers. Then somebody has to monitor that line and nobody gets to it because it's a weekend. Mr. Schleyer said on the chart there's all kinds of smells, rotten eggs, whatever you smell you could pick out and circle it and it will give you in a direction to what it leads to. Mrs. deLeon said she is going to put the state representatives names and telephone numbers on the flyer. She said they will just keep it simple and give them the information on the odor complaint wheel.

Ms. Louder said the main complaint area is Riverside Drive by the hill climb. That's where the DEP drives around, they don't drive around over here by the Township. Mr. Hijazi said DEP has been doing this a couple of years now? Mr. Schleyer said yes, at least a couple of years. Mr. Hijazi said that's good, then they have everything documented. Mrs. deLeon said now we're smelling it more. Mr. Schleyer said they only had two incidents where they smelled it on that side. Mrs. deLeon said they weren't there to smell it. Ms. Louder said again, the cell position, the open work face changed over the course of time which put it at the top of the hill. Mr. Schleyer said DEP should be aware what's going on as they are the regulators and they are the ones who do the enforcement.

Mrs. deLeon said she may have someone who is willing to go through all the DEP reports and do a chart on one page. Mr. Cahalan said they are from two different sources. Mrs. deLeon said they should go through the inspection reports. Mr. Cahalan said he'll be doing that. Mrs. deLeon said okay, then she won't worry about it. Mr. Schleyer said he'll just put the address down. We'll start with a simple flyer with the revisions and go from there.

Mr. Schleyer said the groundwater trend report is due June 30, 2014. The 1Q2014 groundwater sampling occurred the week of March 17, 2014 and that report will be going out on Monday.

Mr. Schleyer said the correspondence/reports are Form U applications, abatement system report, 1Q2014 DEP facility report and the 1Q2014 LFG collection efficiency report.

Mr. Schleyer said for the April 8th DEP inspection, Susan French was on site for an engineering meeting. April 10th was the inspection by Jessica Wagoner and Amy Faulch. On April 23rd Wally Govern came out and conducted a follow-up site inspection. On May 8th Susan French was back for the engineering meeting and her site inspection.

Mr. Schleyer said host municipal inspections were April 3rd, April 24th and May 9th by Chris Taylor and today as well. Mrs. deLeon said on your way over here, did you smell any odors on Applebutter Road? Mr. Taylor said all he smelled was sewage. He smelled it in the radius as he turned and then it got stronger as he got to the aeration tanks. It was definitely a sewage odor. He said there is a difference between sewer gas and landfill gas.

Mr. Schleyer said for waste vehicles, they had 2,841 commercial waste trucks, 42 of them were overweight in April. There were 20 warnings and 22 suspensions and 7 trucks were greater than the 3% overweight and they were all tractor trailers. Mr. Taylor said thank you for effort on the suspensions. IESI is doing everything they can do, but unfortunately it's a damage already been done scenario when a truck gets to your door, it's already been on the highway and a danger until it gets to your door. There's a lot of damage that could happen before it even gets to your front door. It's got to be an enforcement effort on the part of some government entities, state or county to fine it. Mrs. deLeon said on the tour today, the truck that was coming out of the landfill that passed her before she got to BRE, was flying. Mr. Schleyer said it would be easier if she told them the time. Ms. Louder said it was a dump truck. They were traveling quite fast as well.

Mr. Schleyer said there was a list of the start-ups and shutdowns for April. There was nothing too much out of the ordinary.

Mrs. deLeon said when you said your flare was turned off, was it turned off completely? When it's on, is there a percentage? Mr. Schleyer said they are burning somewhere between 900 and 1,200 scfm. The power plant usually does in the range of 2,000 or 2,200. That is their maximum and that's why IESI is flaring off excess gas. They burn about 30% and BRE does 70%. Mrs. deLeon said she took pictures of the flare and it's inside, an enclosed flare as opposed to the open flare. The tank was leachate storage. It's normally empty. There's the lagoon. Mr. Schleyer said it's written up as the leachate emergency lagoon.

Mr. Schleyer said the gas collection, their slope is passable and it will be ready for sampling in June. The abatement system is functioning pretty well. On the leachate collection all the flow rates are attached and they continue to monitor them. They had five separate radiation monitoring occurrences from April through May 15, 2014. They were all acceptable medical waste isotopes and were deposited on site. For construction, they are ready to do the capping that they had talked about last month. The contractor is showing up and they will do three acres on the south slope. He mentioned they constructed the spray line. Mrs. deLeon said once the cap is put on those filled acres, that should cut down on the leachate? Mr. Schleyer said it may not be enough to be really noticeable since the one cell is still a new cell and we get a lot of stormwater that turns into leachate. Ideally as you cap, you reduce your leachate lines. Mrs. deLeon said the leachate water doesn't have an odor and they don't test for odor? Mr. Schleyer said there's no odor, it's more concentrated. Leachate and gas condensate are two different things.

Mrs. deLeon said Calpine uses that same sewer line? Mr. Schleyer said yes. Mrs. deLeon said the concentrate of your leachate going in there gets diluted by water going in there from other sources. The city calculates that on your fee on how they charge you to process it. Mr. Schleyer said correct. They sample their discharge directly so there are no other factors. You don't take the BRE stuff. Mr. Schleyer said right, that's why they are trucking that out. Mrs. deLeon said do you know how often the trucks come in? Mr. Schleyer didn't know.

Mr. Taylor said looking at the Lechate Demand Report, leachate is metered through six stations for LMC-6, 7 and 8 and pump stations 1, 2 and 3. For LMC-6, the secondary flows are going upwards. They used to be in the single numbers to begin the year which was your typical historical. Now they are up to about 52. Is that an area of concern for you? Mr. Schleyer said they don't have a specific reason yet, they are looking at everything. Maybe two months ago they cleaned out LMC-7 lines and last week they did LMC-6 and LMC-8 in the same manner so everything is as open as possible and it's routine maintenance. They will keep an eye on it and see if there are any differences. Mr. Taylor said LMC-7 is in the mid-40's and 50s which is a little higher than typical for that. LMC-8 has been over 100 counts per day for every week this year, most recently 299. Pump stations 1, 2 and 3, the secondary flows are negligible 0's in some cases which is good. Pump station 3 flows have been higher during the time you were tying in the new cell and that's attributed to rainwater in the system when the cells were open and the tie-in it may drop down to sub-zeros. LMC-6 we want to keep an eye on and LMC-8 is the on-going problem.

Mr. Taylor asked what the status of permit applications were? Mr. Schleyer said they have none open or pending. Mr. Taylor said on the eFacts website, the two applications that were in for the Fox property are both listed as withdrawn.

Mr. Taylor observed during the inspection today:

- The wind was blowing mainly from the south, a little from the southeast at 5 to 10 MPH
- The BRE plant was running
- No odors, litter or mud were observed on Applebutter Road, the entrance road or at the landfill office
- The truck wash was not in use due to the dry conditions
- Sedimentation basin 4 was being cleaned out by large track machine which is a standard thing
- The landfill flare was shut down. You were working on the louver controls
- Pickers were working on the south face cleaning up garbage
- Slight gas odor was observed at the maintenance building at 11:23 am; at the middle of the MSE wall at 11:25 am
- Garbage odor at the west end of the MSE wall at 11:26 am
- Your disposing of garbage in Cell 4E Stage 2, wind screen replacing the working face
- Seep repairs have been completed at the base of the west face

Mr. Taylor asked if they were caught up with the seep repairs? Mr. Schleyer said there's a few minor ones, but the major ones are repaired. Mr. Taylor said you're not excavating any material in Cell 4E to generate cover.

- Two to three trucks were observed dumping
- One truck waiting at the working face
- The odor control spray line was activated and we observed it working
- There was no strong odor from the odor control solution being sprayed into the air. It's not a heavy sickly perfume, it's practically odorless
- You are dressing up the cover at the west face by placing more soil in certain areas
- Landfill flare went out yesterday due to an electric trip out and it is expected to be back on-line tonight
- Basin 6 was already cleaned out, sediment removed. Mr. Schleyer said when they are done, they will come in and stabilize it with vegetation.
- The west high wall appears unchanged with no major slope failures observed
- A few vultures were observed at the landfill.

Mrs. deLeon said leachate seeps smell, why doesn't leachate water smell? Mr. Schleyer said because a leachate seep, it's probably a combination of where it is at the time, what else is coming with the leachate seep itself.

Leachate itself will have some odor in the leachate collection system. Everything has some kind of an odor. With the leachate seep, you have a combination of that and the decomposing garbage that might be carried out with the odor and the leachate as it seeps itself to the surface. It comes out from the surface of the landfill so they have to dig that back in. That's why you can detect odors when they do a leachate seep as they dig into the old garbage and make a new route for water and anything that will follow the path of least resistance, and sometimes it ends up coming out on the side slope. That's what happened last time. They dig a hole and take that garbage out and whatever is tightly packing and how the water travels out to the surface. They dig it out to the working face and dispose of it and put rock in there and then they cover the whole thing with dirt again. The seep will go into the rock and drain back down into the landfill and find its way down to the bottom where the leachate collection plate is. A seep is just something that found a path of least resistance to the surface of the slope versus traveling through the waste mass down to the bottom of the landfill. Mrs. deLeon said how would that smell, a garbage or gas smell? Mr. Schleyer said it might be a combination of both. Mrs. deLeon said it could be what we smelled today. Mr. Schleyer said he didn't see any major seeps at that time.

Mrs. deLeon asked if a liner was damaged? Mr. Schleyer said in Wally's inspection report when they were digging a leachate seep on the outer edge of the south slope, they accidentally nicked the top edge of the liner. It wasn't on the bottom. They had to cover that up until they could get a liner crew in to make that repair. They sealed it and covered it with soil.

Mr. Taylor said the next meeting is June 19th at 1:00 PM here in the Township Council meeting room.

The meeting adjourned, the time was 2:45 p.m.