

Meeting Minutes: Speonk Solvent Plume Working Group

Meeting Date: May 2, 2013 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Location: Westhampton Library

Attendees:

Robert DeCandia, Project Manager DEC
Walter Parish, Regional Hazardous Waste Remediation Engineer, DEC
Guy Bobersky, Section Chief, BURA, REM-A, Division of Environmental Remediation, DEC
Ron Paulsen, Associate Hydrogeologist, Division of Environmental Quality, SCDHS
Anna Throne-Holst, Town Supervisor, Town of Southampton
Chris Nuzzi, Town Councilman, Town of Southampton
Fred Thiele, NYS Assemblyman
Jay Schneiderman, Suffolk County Legislator,
Jenn Hartnagel, Environmental Advocate, Group for the East End
Stephanie Davis, Resident, Hydrogeologist
Bob Mozer, Co-President, Speonk/Remsenburg Civic Association
Rich Baldwin, Co-President, Speonk-Remsenburg Civic Association
Hank Beck, Chairman, CAC-West
Andrea Spilka, President, Southampton Town Coalition of Civics
Jennifer Garvey, Deputy Chief of Staff, Town of Southampton

Discussion:

Monitoring Funds Committed

The DEC representatives announced they had received authorization on May 1, 2013 to spend funds for the monitoring of the Speonk Solvent Plume, though the level of funding is unknown at this time. To date, the Suffolk County Department of Health Services has been conducting all ongoing groundwater monitoring, so this is an important addition of resources.

In order to implement this authorization, the DEC must craft a work assignment that will effectively serve as a scope of work and contract basis for hiring a consulting contractor to perform the monitoring. The DEC will consider the input of any SSP Working Group members in crafting the monitoring scheme that will be developed for this work assignment.

The local representatives agreed to draft a monitoring plan for consideration by the DEC as soon as possible. They also emphasized their interest in continuing to provide early input and feedback in the preparation of any other work assignments or other initiatives the DEC may take to address this area, and the DEC representatives agree to provide this opportunity.

Second Area of Concern

The question was raised about whether the DEC's monitoring program will include the "second area of concern" which has been identified in the Dock Road area to the west of the known Speonk Solvent Plume (SPP) boundaries. To date, the testing results by the Suffolk County Department of Health Services have shown levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) elevated above drinking water standards in three private wells, though trace VOCs have been detected in four additional locations. Of the three affected properties, one has hooked-in to public water, a second has installed a treatment system, and the third is being supplied with bottled water as part of the DEC's Alternate Water Supply Program. However, developing a more detailed understanding of the boundaries of this contamination would require further study.

The "second area of concern" is located less than one-half mile from the boundaries of the SSP and was identified when the site characterization of the SSP was underway. There was some question as to whether the data collected from the Dock Rd area suggested that the contamination was emanating from the same source. This question, together with the timing of discovery, precluded its inclusion in the SSP Site Characterization Study. The two areas are further distinguishable based on the significant differences in the contamination concentration levels: The VOC concentration in the SSP area is approximately 1,000 parts per billion, while VOC concentration in the "second area of concern" is approximately 50 parts per billion, though levels up to 250 ppb were found.

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) has been aware of this "area of concern" since 2008 as a result of routine well testing and has performed extensive outreach to surrounding properties that utilize private well water in order to conduct free well tests. As a result of the area studies conducted in 2008 and 2010~~4~~, properties where VOCs are elevated beyond drinking water standards have been addressed via public water hook-up, treatment installation, or supply of bottled water, as discussed above.

The DEC representatives conveyed that a primary objective of their work is to limit exposure pathways. Ingestion is naturally the primary pathway of concern, and this has been addressed in the SPP area and "second area of concern". Soil Vapor Intrusion is also a common concern in plume areas, but not currently in the SSP area due to the depth of the contamination and presence of a clean water barrier. In the "second area of concern," however, the contamination is shallower and further testing is needed in order to evaluate this as a potential concern.

The local representatives inquired if actions such as the required addition of vapor barriers for new construction should still be considered because there is undeveloped land within and downgradient of the contaminated areas. Vapor barriers cannot EASILY be added post construction, so it seems like an appropriate and worthy safeguard to install during

construction. The question was also posed if new construction within and downgradient from the plume should be prohibited from using well water and required instead to hook-in to public water. The SCDHS representative responded that there are safeguards in place already that would trigger a requirement for both vapor barriers and connection to public water in order to obtain SCDHS approval for new construction, if a water main is available. Regardless, the group agreed to consider this action further.

The local representatives also asked what options are available to undertake continued study of the “second area of concern” in order to better understand the boundaries, depth and potential pathways of exposure and discharge. The DEC responded that it may be possible to include the “second area of concern” in the monitoring plan approved for the SSP, or it may need to be addressed via a separate work assignment. They agreed to review the options internally and report back to the group.

The local representatives responded that they would support whichever mechanism would provide the timeliest answers, understanding that any new work assignment can take 4 -6 months to initiate.

A request was also made for “forward modeling” of both areas to show the likely movement of the contamination in an effort to plan groundwater monitoring and mitigation actions accordingly.

Public Outreach

The group discussed the importance of public outreach and ensuring residents have thorough information about both the SSP and “second area of concern.” It was discussed that the Town has created a page on its web site to post updates and background information, and to receive questions from the public on the topic. The location is:

<http://www.southamptontownny.gov/content/596/598/7445/default.aspx>

The group also agreed that the location of the “second area of concern” is not currently understood by the public because community discussions have been limited primarily to the SSP area. Property owners within the affected area have been approached on an individual basis by the SCDHS about testing their well water, but are likely unaware that their neighbors have been as well.

Also, though monitoring has been ongoing in the affected areas, in order to facilitate an updated area-wide survey of well results in the “second area of concern” it was agreed that the Town, SCDHS and Suffolk County Water Authority would work together to reach out to properties with private water supply wells in the area to arrange for free testing. This effort will commence promptly.

Meeting Closed. Next meeting date is June 6 from 5:00 to 7:00 in the Westhampton Library.