

Coordination & Engagement on Issues Related to the JH Baxter Facility

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CORE TEAM

Meeting 20

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Facilitator's Meeting Summary

Participants for all or part of the meeting: Jeremy Aasum (Community member/ABC), Lisa Arkin (BT), Arjorie Arberry-Baribeault (BT), Robin Bloomgarden (Community Member), Mary Camarata (DEQ), Killian Condon (DEQ), Alice Corcoran (EPA), Bonnie Criss (EPA), Dylan Darling (DEQ), Bill Dunbar (EPA), Brad Eagleson (DEQ), Ed Farren (Community member/ABC), David Farrer (OHA), Don Hanson (DEQ), Todd Hudson (OHA), Travis Knudsen (LRAPA), Randy Nattis (EPA), Teresa Roark (LCPH), Diana Rohlman (OSU), Rafi Ronquillo (EPA), Nancy Sawka (DEQ), Brad Schultz (DEQ), Susan Turnblom (DEQ), Trail Smith (CoE), Jon Wilson (CoE), and Lin Woodrich (ABC).
Facilitation: Donna Silverberg, DS Consulting.

Welcome and Introductions - Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the group to the 20th Core Team meeting. The purpose of the session was to hear updates from DEQ's Cleanup Program regarding soil sampling and clean-up efforts. And to provide an opportunity for brief updates and questions regarding related community, OHA, LRAPA, City of Eugene, Lane County, and DEQ efforts.

The group noted that this was the 20th meeting of the Core Team and appreciated that everyone has prioritized this effort. Many agency representatives noted this process has positively influenced how they work on other processes in the region.

Soil Sampling & Clean-Up Status – Susan reported that, to date, the agencies conducted dioxin sampling at 62 residential yards; of those 13 are below the 4.7ppt cleanup level, 39 are between 4.7 and 40ppt, and 11 are over 40ppt, which is the threshold indicating the need for expedited cleanup. The last round of EPA sampling revealed the additional 4 properties with dioxins above 40ppt. Clean up of those properties is expected, however, details have yet to be determined. As a result, the 'edge of the contamination' in and around JH Baxter is unknown, so they will do another round of step-out monitoring, the details of which are still being determined. Also, EPA collected depth-samples at the 4 additional properties to determine how much soil needs to be removed.

Questions and comments from Core Team members:

- *Question:* Where are the additional 4 properties located?
 - *Response:* Primarily along Baxter Street going North.
- *Comment:* Within the community the sentiment from some people living on the edges is that they would like to be sampled to identify if their yards are contaminated. The step out likely will be welcome news to them.

Don provided an update on DEQ's tree and soil removal contracting efforts: DEQ has contracted with GSI to manage the tree removal (in preparation for the soil removal) and then the soil removal, which will be two separate contracts. DEQ received 2 bids for tree removal and hopes to have a contract signed soon. If so, the tree work will begin on October 18th [Post Meeting Note: tree removal work started on October 3, 2023].

DEQ is working with residents to move them out of their homes while the soil removal work is conducted. They are in the process of completing relocation agreements with each resident. DEQ will provide funds for lodging, food, and pet expenses. Additionally, access agreements are being renewed, as some have expired.

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Yesterday, GSI sent DEQ draft bid documents for the soil removal work. Once reviewed and finalized by DEQ and DOJ, GSI will solicit bids for the soil removal work and contractors will begin conducting site walks with residents. DEQ is working very closely with residents and expects that the soil work will be completed by the end of the year, possibly before Thanksgiving. Lin offered that ABC could provide flyers to neighbors letting them know that the soil removal work will be happening, what they can expect, and what they should avoid.

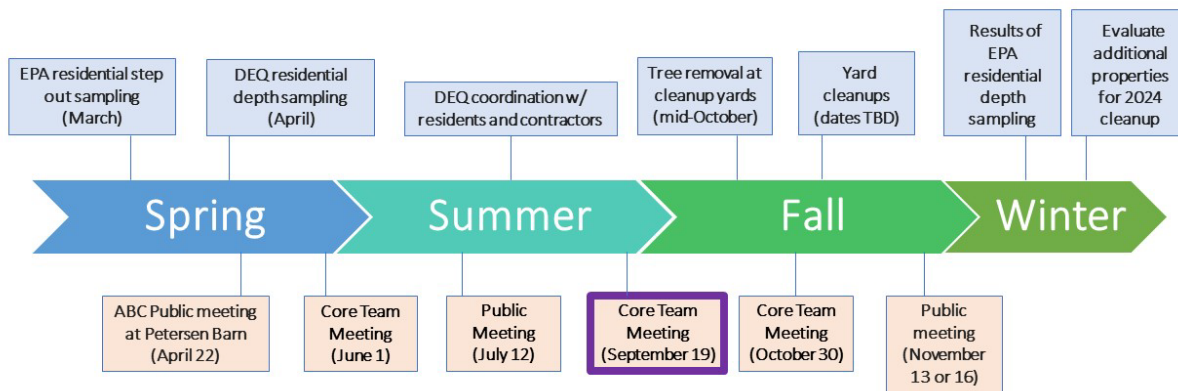
Questions and comments from Core Team members:

- *Question:* Is the yard cleanup happening consecutively or all at the same time?
 - *Response:* The intent is to group some of the properties for cleanup to be efficient. DEQ is providing funds to cover lodging and letting each resident choose how and where they use it.
 - Maybe a furnished rented apartment for residents would be a less expensive way to go in the future.
- *Comment:* Understand the delays and that DEQ is there to help address the issue, however, some community members hear about the delays and are frustrated. Suggest under-promising and over-delivering, instead of the other way around to help manage expectations and not frustrate the public.
- *Question:* How long will residents need to be out of their homes?
 - *Response:* DEQ will not know until the contractor bids come back. Each contractor may have a different plan and DEQ wants to be flexible. Likely a week or less.
- *Question:* Will DEQ consider doing dust swabs inside the homes of those with the highest contamination levels?
 - *Response:* DEQ is not currently planning on it, but can discuss options. It is more invasion for DEQ to go into people's homes; but since DEQ has had the question asked multiple times, they can discuss further. Dave noted that having the residents out of their homes during the cleanup actions is very helpful in preventing contamination from being tracked into the house. Additionally, the soil will be watered down to limit dust movement and there will also be air monitoring during removal.
- *Question:* How deep is the excavation?
 - *Response:* Depending on the contamination levels on each property, it will be between 6" and 2'.
- *Question:* How many are rental houses? And is the landlord involved? Do they have a place to move their tenant to?
 - *Response:* One is rented and the landlord is involved and supportive of the state providing another location for their tenant.
- *Question:* Will the agencies need community member help getting access agreements for the step-out?
 - *Response:* Not yet, but possibly in the future. DEQ will be in touch when needed.

Susan highlighted actions and plans on the 2023 residential cleanup timeline, noting that tree removals are being planned for mid-October and yard cleanups will be sometime this fall. EPA data from onsite and residential depth sampling is expected later this fall and winter. Additionally, there will be a Core Team in October and a public meeting the week of November 13th on Zoom.

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DEQ Residential Cleanup Timeline 2023 Completed and Planned Activities



Other Updates

- DEQ Water Quality** – Brad Eagleson reported that JH Baxter has both stormwater and groundwater permits. The stormwater system collects stormwater from the site and pumps it to a central location that can store 3.3 million gallons of water, then it is treated to remove contaminants. Over Labor Day weekend there was vandalism at JH Baxter: power cords to the pumps were cut, along with smaller cords that help the stormwater system operate (the groundwater system has not been impacted). The system is down now but being repaired. DEQ is hopeful repairs will be done within the next two weeks. If there is rain while the system is down, Brad assured the group there is adequate room for rain in the collection tanks.

Regarding security: a gate was installed that is more secure than the previous. Georgia Baxter is also working with Security of America to install motion-sensor cameras in the area to monitor movement and alert the security team with photos. This plan is not in place yet. But should be soon.

In response to questions, Brad noted that JH Baxter is paying for the repairs and increased security and DEQ's stormwater permit is not affected at this time due to the lack of stormwater. If repairs are not completed in time for the rainy season and there is contaminated stormwater discharge that is not treated, Baxter may face additional civil penalties for violation of the permit.

- Beyond Toxics:** Lisa reported that Sen. James Manning, who represents west Eugene, is planning an informational hearing next Thursday, September 28th on the superfund evaluation at the State Legislature [Post Meeting Note: the hearing was postponed]. BT was asked to, and is, coordinating the hybrid event. The hearing is with the Senate Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal, and World Affairs Committee at the Capitol Building.

Lisa also noted that BT has more air purifiers available for community members and thanked Core Team members for their help and support with getting the purifiers to people.

- ABC:** Lin thanked BT for providing air purifiers to community members.

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- **OHA:** Todd reported that the Health Consultation Report comment period wrapped up at the end of July. OHA received a total of 7 comments. Next OHA will review the comments and decide the best way to address those for the final report.
- **LRAPA:** Travis reported that updates have been made to the JH Baxter StoryMap. The StoryMap is a tool to keep the community informed and updated on JH Baxter efforts.
- **City of Eugene:** Jon reported that the City of Eugene continues to conduct site visits bi-weekly to monitor ground water discharge, and no issues have been noted. Also, Eugene police and emergency services are aware of the site and situation and are prepared in case issues arise.
- **EPA:** Randy reported that EPA is currently onsite sampling the tank farm; sampling will take around 3 weeks. Results will take a few months to process and then EPA will be able to move forward with enforcement and removal options. A superfund process update will likely be ready to share at next month's Core Team meeting.
- **Lane County Public Health:** Nothing to report.

Next Steps & Action Items

The next Core Team meeting will be a virtual meeting on October 30th. There will be a virtual public meeting scheduled for November 13th or 16th. If Core Team members have input on important information to share at the November public meeting, please reach out to Donna or Emily to share ideas.

Donna thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

This summary was prepared by the DS Consulting facilitation team. Comments or suggested edits should be sent to emily@dsconsult.co