

Aquarion Water Company
North Avenue Tank Replacement Project
Westport, Connecticut
NEIGHBORHOOD DISCUSSION WITH LEP
FRIDAY MARCH 19, 2021, 11-AM

Attending:

Mark Fois, Aquarion Water Company
Gary Simard, PE, AECOM
John Brodgen, LEP - AECOM
Jim Robison, LEP – Aquarion Water Company
Gail Kelly, Ombudsman
Candace Banks
Tim Fielding
Alan and Shira Honigstein
Brad Agar
David Chaskin
Ann Bichahlo

- 1) Opening remarks from Mark Fois
- 2) John Brodgen described his role providing guidance and assistance for the voluntary cleanup and disposal of lead impacted soil. Explained that because of the presence of sand blasting grit which may have been used to sand blast paint some time ago, and because of the age of the tank, they felt that there could be lead in the soil. They decided to sample to see if there was lead. The October samples confirmed this. These samples were taken of the dark lense of suspect material itself (what we believed to be blasting grit) and showed elevated levels of lead and some amount of chromium, consistent with blasting media.

He convened with AECOM to remove and test the lead impacted soil. Explained the process of excavating and testing the bottom and the side walls of the excavation. Samples sent to the lab.

This was a voluntary clean up. Explained that CTDEEP has numeric standards for clean up and they used these Remedial Standard Regulations (RSRs) as guidelines for this project. They continued to re-test until they found clean limits. This process was conducted around the tank. Impacted soil removal is about 75% completed.

Emphasized that soil handling is being conducted using best practices. No exposure to neighbors. The lead impacted soil is being removed in containers. The clean-up is being overseen by John and other inspectors on the site.

John stated that after the soil is removed there will be a closure report which will be available to the neighbors. He also reported that they had a call with DEEP & DPH in response to questions from a neighbor. Ray Frigone, Assistant Director of Remediation Division of DEEP & the representatives from DPH were satisfied with the direction that the work was going; they were satisfied with the results, and that there were reasonable safeguards to human exposure. DEEP issued an email to the inquiring neighbor presenting this position.

- 3) Gary Simard stated that the lead impacted soil is generally within 8 feet of the tank wall and within the fence line that historically surrounded the steel tank. It does not extend near any of the property limits.
- 4) Gary Simard – Pump Station – Manifests
Gary explained that during the upgrade of the pump station they needed to remove various materials or routine construction debris. Certain material had to be removed as special waste which needed to be handled separately. The removal for some of these materials required the need for generating waste manifest.

Gary also addressed the soil and erosion control measures during the pump station upgrade. Stated that AECOM had an inspector on site that inspects the controls. Also, the Town Conservation Dept. inspected the controls on several occasions and found no violations.

Questions:

Tim Fielding – What does AWC do about other tanks elsewhere? Are they being active or proactive with respect to lead in the soil?

Mark Fois responded. AWC has at least 100 water tanks and are aware of those they know have lead. They address those with lead coating first. AWC conducts inspections on all its tanks.

Brad Agar – Brad questioned testing for lead and chromium and asked (1) whether they are also removing chromium; and (2) why only excavate to 10' and not to the full depth of the tank? Is anything leaching at the bottom?

John Brodgen responded the chromium levels were lower as excavation proceeded and the level of chromium dropped off. The lead was the driver for the soil being removed. Gary Simard stated that the project will excavate down to the bottom of the steel tank and eventually remove the footings. Not ready to remove all that dirt yet and this cannot happen until the new north tank is completed.

John Brodgen also stated the laboratory results show the concentration of lead decreases as distance from the tank and depth increases as would be expected from a surface release adjacent to the base of the tank there is no paint on the tank below the soil level.

Candace Banks – summarized and confirmed:

- (i) Visual evidence on south tank
- (ii) Working way out to clean margins. Sampled around the tank
- (iii) Independence of John Brodgen – John works for AECOM but licensed by DEEP and acts like an agent for DEEP for overseeing & certifying clean ups
- (iv) Jim Robinson is also an LEP – He initially sampled the suspect soil and then asked to have AECOM bring in John Brodgen to be independent
- (v) Disposal of the soil is happening at certified locations
- (vi) Water quality. Is it safe? Mark responded that AWC has an extensive water quality testing program and that the lead impacted soil around the tank has no implications to the water quality within the tank

Brad Agar – What is the coating on the inside of the tank? What is its purpose? Mark Fois responded that the coating is to protect the steel from corrosion and to insure the drinking water remains in pristine condition.

Gail Kelly – (i) Please explain why the mandatory inspection reports were not provided to the neighbors. Mark responded they contain sensitive, structural information and there are security issues with disclosing the reports. The Freedom of Information Act supports the withholding of these reports.

Gary Simard confirmed that for security reasons in response to 9/11 these reports are not available to the public either from Aquarion Water Company, or from any other water company.

(ii) Please explain why the October testing results were not made available to the neighbors. John Brodgen explained from an LEP's point of view releasing the initial results before a complete investigation can cause undue distress. Initial samples in environmental investigations can lead to incorrect conclusions and incorrect ideas at a project site.

(iii) Pre-construction testing – Gary Simard - environmental data from the north portion of the site did not indicate any contamination.

(iv) Any wetlands testing – Gary Simard – there was soil testing for wetland delineation but there has not been any reason for testing the wetlands for environmental concerns.