

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
BROOKLYN-QUEENS AQUIFER FEASIBILITY STUDY

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING: June 6, 2002

MINUTES

The fourth meeting of the Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer (BQA) Feasibility Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on Thursday, June 6, 2002 at Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center. (Attendance list attached.)

Old Business

Helen Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc. (HNA), opened the meeting with welcoming remarks. Ms. Neuhaus reminded CAC members that the Operational Guidelines that were adopted at the previous meeting provide for a public comment period during the last fifteen minutes of the CAC meeting, or before any vote or attempt to reach consensus on an issue.

Following adoption of the Minutes of the May 2<sup>nd</sup> CAC meeting without changes, Ms. Neuhaus facilitated a discussion of responses to issues and concerns raised at that meeting. These included the following:

- Ms. Neuhaus announced that a web page for the BQA Study has been posted on the New York City Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) site. HNA is working with DEP to update the page, which can be accessed at [www.nyc.gov/dep/html/news/bqa.html](http://www.nyc.gov/dep/html/news/bqa.html). The CAC was invited to submit comments or suggestions regarding information that should be available at the site.
- In response to Linda Hazel's request that a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) representative attend CAC meetings on a regular basis, Ms. Neuhaus reported that a DEC representative will attend every other month. On alternate months, DEC will provide the project team with a report on the status of work at the West Side Corporation (WSC) for presentation to the CAC.
- In light of the CAC's interest in focusing solely on issues related to Stations 6 and 24 (as expressed at the previous CAC meeting), it was reported that outstanding questions concerning the drought will be answered in writing. In the future, DEP will provide drought-related updates to the Community Board District Managers, who have indicated that they will forward these materials to persons on their mailing lists.

Update on West Side Corporation/Station 24

Don Cohen, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. (MPI), reported on clean-up efforts at the WSC by referencing a meeting with Andrew English, DEC, held earlier in the day to review the effectiveness of thermal technologies. A report on this issue is expected to be available next week and will be summarized for presentation at the next CAC meeting.

Reporting on groundwater clean-up at Station 24, Mr. Cohen explained that he and Bill Yulinsky, DEP, met with drilling contractors in the field two weeks ago to discuss the location of one recovery and several observation wells. Six sets of wells, three on Station 24 property and three in the neighborhood, will be drilled. Each set will include three wells at varying depths. Mr. Cohen further explained that the observation wells will be used to measure water levels, not for pumping. He added that each well will be covered with a small manhole cover and will be flush with the ground. Drilling at each location is expected to last one day; a second day may be needed for clean-up. The three off-site wells will be located as follows:

- In front of 175-03 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue (on the 175<sup>th</sup> Street side)
- At the intersection of Sayres Avenue and 111<sup>th</sup> Avenue (at the wedge-shaped intersection of the streets)
- In front of 109-54 172<sup>nd</sup> Street (mid-block between 109<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Avenues)

Mr. Cohen asked the CAC for assistance in identifying immediate neighbors of the observation wells so that they could be notified.

Related comments included the following:

- In response to Ms. Hazel's question about the location of the observation wells in relation to the contaminated plume from the WSC, Mr. Cohen explained that two of the off-site wells will be on the outer edge of the plume; the third will be located within the plume. Ms. Hazel stressed the need to locate the monitoring wells so that they bracket the area of the plume.
- In response to Manuel Caughman's question concerning whether DEC's existing monitoring wells in the area could also be used for sampling purposes, Mr. Cohen noted that these wells are temporary geoprobes, not permanent wells.
- Mr. Cohen reported that permitting issues related to well installation are being coordinated with DEC.
- Mr. Cohen reported that Assemblyman William Scarborough has contacted DEC regarding the construction of apartment houses on 180<sup>th</sup> Street near the WSC. DEC has agreed to test the soil at the site of the new homes and is working with MPI to gain access.

In response to Debora Hunte's request for information on proposed sewer upgrades as they relate to Station 24 discharge, Mr. Cohen explained that meetings have been held with DEP's Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations/Engineering to review the size of the storm sewers, as well as house connections. Continuing discussion with the Bureau and further investigation will confirm if any storm sewer upgrades will be necessary. Nicole Brown, MPI, further explained that a new, enlarged sanitary sewer line is proposed to carry the discharge from Station 24 down 177<sup>th</sup> Street to 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue where it will flow into a 48" pipe.

Mr. Yulinsky added that DEP must improve the sewers within the two-block project area in order to clean up the groundwater from the WSC site. In response to Ms. Hunte's concern that the sewer upgrade won't help the back-up problem, both Mr. Yulinsky and Mr. Cohen assured the group that the upgrades will prevent flow from the Station 24 clean-up from negatively impacting the sewer back-up situation.

Mr. Cohen further addressed concerns that the sewers will not be able to handle the additional flow from Station 24 by emphasizing that water flow will not be increased in any sewer that cannot handle it. In response to Ms. Hunte's comment that this effort only addresses part of the problem, Mr. Cohen reiterated that Deputy Commissioner Douglas Greeley, DEP, is committed to upgrading all sewers in Queens.

After Yvonne Reddick noted that the community is speaking from past experience, Ms. Hazel stated that DEP work performed several years ago alleviated a longstanding flooding problem in her home.

#### Update on Station 6 Pilot Plant

Mr. Cohen reported that testing at the Station 6 Pilot Plant is in its fourth month and that "everything is going smoothly." Increasing amounts of data will soon be generated.

#### Scientific Review Panel (SRP)

Ms. Neuhaus introduced the discussion by reviewing basic information concerning the SRP that had previously been discussed. She reiterated that the SRP will be an independent technical review panel composed of 6-8 top level scientists and engineers. It will not meet on a regular basis but will be called upon by the CAC, either as a group or individually, to review data; discuss methodology; conduct independent research, if needed; and provide detailed explanations to the Committee. Most importantly, Ms. Neuhaus emphasized that the SRP will be an objective advocate for the community.

#### ***Disciplines***

Ms. Neuhaus distributed a draft list of suggested disciplines for the SRP (see attached). The disciplines, which were also listed on butcher block paper, included: Chemistry, Chemical Engineering (water quality and treatment), Civil Engineering (water distribution), Epidemiology, Hydrogeology, Public Health and Risk Assessment.

In response to Ms. Hunte's question about the need for a quality control/quality assurance category, Mr. Yulinsky explained that as independent experts in their fields, members of the SRP will act as quality control agents. In response to Peter Richards' suggestion that a hydrologist be added to the list, Mr. Cohen explained that hydrologists deal with surface water, whereas hydrogeologists deal with groundwater. Hydrogeology is therefore the more appropriate discipline for the BQA project. A suggestion was also made to add a cancer researcher to the list. This has been included as a subcategory of the Epidemiology discipline.

#### ***Qualifications/Criteria***

Ms. Neuhaus opened the discussion by enumerating several basic criteria for SRP candidates, specifically that they should have no personal or professional conflict of interest and that the CAC should have confidence in the level of relevant expertise and range of experience represented on the panel. Mr. Richards underscored the need for candidates to be independent.

There was general agreement that scientists should have an M.D. or Ph.D. degree and that engineers should be qualified as Professional Engineers (P.E.) and hold a Master's Degree. After Mr. Cohen pointed out that there may be older engineers who lack academic training but have many years

experience, it was agreed that relevant experience and appropriate certification might be substituted for a Master's degree. (See attached chart for details.) Ms. Hazel recommended that candidates also demonstrate a proven track record and a solid record of publication in their fields.

### ***Potential Sources***

Ms. Neuhaus distributed a draft list of potential sources for SRP members (see attached), noting that it is not comprehensive and does not include specific departments or units. She added that the list focuses on universities, hospitals and professional associations.

In response to a recommendation by Ms. Hazel that the SRP include the Canadian author of a book entitled Groundwater and Public Health, Ms. Neuhaus requested that Ms. Hazel forward the author's name and resume.

Ms. Hunte recommended Dr. Caravanos, Hunter College. Mr. Yulinsky noted that DEP received assistance from Hunter College on computer modeling at the beginning of the project and questioned whether this would represent a conflict of interest. It was decided that it did not, since Dr. Caravanos is affiliated with a different department at the school. Mr. Caughman said that he had a candidate in mind but would need to obtain permission before submitting her name. A cancer research organization, as suggested by Ms. Hazel, and Hunter College were added to the list of sources.

Ms. Neuhaus indicated that once consensus is reached on the list, candidates will be contacted and resumes requested. The CAC will then review resumes, either as a full committee or in smaller subcommittees. This led to a discussion of subcommittee formation and the question of whether the CAC should meet over the summer. It was suggested that, given the number of resumes to be reviewed, two subcommittees be formed: a Health Subcommittee (to review resumes within the disciplines of Epidemiology and Public Health); and an Engineering Subcommittee (to review Civil and Chemical Engineering, Hydrogeology and Risk Assessment resumes).

During a discussion on how to proceed, it was determined that HNA will initially contact potential candidates to determine their interest and to obtain resumes. CAC members were asked to forward resumes of any additional candidates to HNA. All resumes will be forwarded to the appropriate subcommittee, which will meet over the summer. The full CAC will not meet over the summer, unless major developments arise. CAC members were polled on their choice of subcommittee, with resulting membership as follows: Health Subcommittee - Linda Hazel, Irving Hicks, Debora Hunte, Yvonne Reddick. Engineering Subcommittee - Manuel Caughman, Peter Lutz, Peter Richards. Stephanie Boland, Office of State Senator Malcolm Smith, said that she would speak with the Senator to determine his interest.

Ms. Neuhaus agreed to forward all information about the SRP, including the updated lists of disciplines, criteria and potential sources, and a memo describing the subcommittees, to CAC members not present at this meeting. The memo will also ask CAC members to contact HNA if they are interested in serving on a subcommittee.

### **New Business**

In response to Mr. Richards' question concerning the frequency with which the CAC would be updated on the drought, Ms. Neuhaus reiterated that information regarding drought-related issues

raised at previous CAC meetings will be mailed to members. All future updates regarding the drought will be sent to the District Managers.

Noting the low attendance at the meeting, Ms. Hazel asked if the Operational Guidelines address the issue of multiple absences from CAC meetings. Ms. Neuhaus replied that this issue was discussed but not included in the Guidelines. Mr. Richards suggested that a note be sent to consistently absent members to determine their interest in continuing to serve on the CAC. In the ensuing discussion, the following consensus was reached:

- HNA will send a letter to those CAC members who have missed three or more of the four meetings held so far;
- CAC members who have never attended a meeting will not be invited to serve on a subcommittee, as they are not familiar with the issues;
- Attendance lists from previous meetings will be reviewed. If there are any community residents who attend the meetings regularly, they may be considered as future CAC members, should slots become available. This will be reviewed at the September meeting.

#### Public Comment Period

Michael Turner, Addisleigh Park Civic Association, asked if the CAC should meet over the summer, in light of the start of clean-up work at the WSC. In response, Ms. Hazel noted that no actual clean-up would take place this summer, only the installation of related infrastructure. Responding to a question by Ms. Neuhaus, Mr. Yulinsky noted that data from the Station 6 Pilot Plant will not be available until the fall. Ms. Neuhaus indicated that it might be advisable to send out a newsletter or fact sheet over the summer to keep the community informed of project status.

#### Other Issues

- In response to Mr. Richards' question about the independent testing of wells, Mr. Cohen confirmed that MPI is working with DEP and a private contractor to provide independent testing of wells that might be activated for the drought.
- Ms. Reddick questioned the high fines imposed for violations of drought restrictions. Mr. Yulinsky stated that while he couldn't comment on specific amounts, the fines reflect the seriousness of the drought. The CAC was reminded that drought issues could be discussed with DEP staff after the meeting.

The next CAC meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 5, 2002 at 7 p.m.** [Subsequent to the June 6th meeting, the location of the September meeting was confirmed as the Hillside Manor Comprehensive Care Center, 188-11 Hillside Avenue, Jamaica Estates.]

Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer Feasibility Study  
Citizens Advisory Committee  
Thursday, June 6, 2002

Attendance List

CAC Members/Alternates

Stephanie Boland  
Office of Senator Malcolm Smith

Manuel Caughman  
Community Board #12  
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Linda Caleb Hazel  
A Better Day Inc./St. Benedict the Moor  
St. Bonaventure

Irving Hicks  
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Debora Hunte  
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Peter Lutz  
Office of Queens Borough President

Yvonne Reddick  
Community Board #12

Peter Richards  
Community Board #13

Guests

Sarah Hicks  
Brinkerhoff Action Association

Maurice Muir  
Community Board #12

Tyree Oredein  
Resident

Tara Smith  
Community Board #12

Michael Turner  
Addisleigh Park Civic Association

Media

Courtney Dentch  
Jamaica Times

Project Team

Nicole Brown  
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Don Cohen  
Malcolm Pirnie, Inc.

Roman Kensy  
New York City Department of  
Environmental Protection

Helen Neuhaus  
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Denise Woodin  
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Anita Wright  
Helen Neuhaus & Associates Inc.

Bill Yulinsky  
New York City Department of  
Environmental Protection

**BROOKLYN-QUEENS AQUIFER FEASIBILITY STUDY  
SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANEL (SRP)**

**List of Disciplines**

- Chemistry
- Chemical Engineering
  - Water quality and treatment
- Civil Engineering
  - Water distribution
- Epidemiology
  - Including, but not limited to, expertise in the field of cancer research
- Hydrogeology
- Public Health
- Risk Assessment

### Scientific Review Panel (SRP) Criteria

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Chemistry  Hydrogeology  Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="text-align: center;">• Master’s Degree or Ph.D</li> <li>• Published author, and/or proven track record in field</li> <li>• Relevant experience (significant experience and/or other certification may substitute for Master’s Degree or Ph.D)</li> <li>• No personal or professional conflict of interest</li> </ul>
Chemical Engineering (Water quality and treatment)  Civil Engineering (Water distribution)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="text-align: center;">• P.E. or other certification</li> <li style="text-align: center;">• Master’s Degree or Ph.D (significant experience and/or other certification may substitute for Master’s Degree or Ph.D)</li> <li>• Published author, and/or proven track record in field</li> <li style="text-align: center;">• Relevant experience</li> <li>• No personal or professional conflict of interest</li> </ul>
Epidemiology (Including, but not limited to, expertise in the field of cancer research)  Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="text-align: center;">• Master’s Degree, Ph.D or M.D.</li> <li>• Published author, and/or proven track record in field</li> <li style="text-align: center;">• Relevant experience</li> <li>• No personal or professional conflict of interest</li> </ul>

**BROOKLYN-QUEENS AQUIFER STUDY  
SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANEL (SRP)**

**POTENTIAL SOURCES FOR IDENTIFYING SRP MEMBERS**

---

**UNIVERSITIES**

- 1) **Columbia University**  
Mailman School of Public Health, Department of Environmental Sciences  
Department of Epidemiology
- 2) **Cornell University**  
School of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
New York State Water Resources Institute
- 3) **CUNY City College**  
Center for Water Resources and Environmental Research
- 4) **CUNY Hunter College\***  
School of Health Sciences  
- Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Program
- 5) **CUNY Queens College**  
Center for the Biology of Natural Systems
- 6) **CUNY York College**  
Environmental Health Science Program
- 7) **Manhattan College**  
Department of Environmental Engineering
- 8) **New Jersey Institute of Technology**  
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
- Center for Environmental Engineering and Science
- 9) **New York University**  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- 10) **Princeton University**  
Environmental Engineering and Water Resources Program
- 11) **Rutgers University**  
Department of Biological Sciences

- 12) **Stevens Institute of Technology**  
Center for Environmental Engineering
- 13) **University of Albany**  
Department of Epidemiology

### **HOSPITALS**

- 1) **Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons**
- 2) **University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey - Robert Wood Johnson Medical School**  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute
- 3) **Mount Sinai School of Medicine**  
Department of Community and Preventative Medicine  
Environmental and Occupational Health Clinic
- 4) **New York University School of Medicine/Medical Center**  
Nelson Institute of Environmental Health

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- 1) **American Association for Cancer Research\***  
Scientific society of over 17,000 cancer researchers
- 2) **American Water Works Association - New York Section**  
Drinking Water Experts of New York State.
- 3) **The New York Academy of Sciences**
- 4) **New York Water Environment Association, Inc.**  
Non-profit educational organization of professionals in the field of water quality.
- 5) **New York Academy of Medicine**  
Center for Urban Epidemiologic Studies

\* Added by CAC at June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting