

City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council 4-26, 1998

Unfunded Bus #10

YEA	NAY	ABSENT	PRESENT	
✓				Ms. Kathleen L. Born
✓				Ms. Henrietta Davis
② ✓		① ✓		V. Mayor Anthony Galluccio
✓		✓		Mr. Kenneth E. Reeves
✓				Ms. Sheila T. Russell
✓				Mr. Michael A. Sullivan
✓				Mr. Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
✓				Ms. Katherine Triantafillou
✓				Mayor Francis H. Duehay

② 9 0 0 0

To: The Honorable, the City Councillors From: Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) *Shelley*



**The
Cambridge
Hospital**

Subject: FYI, especially concerning Council orders #20, passed 3/23/98 and #62, passed 3/16/98 re environmental testing/monitoring at 784 Memorial Drive during demolition & construction



1493 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (617) 498-1000

To: Stephen Johnson, Site Management Section Chief
Northeast Regional Office, Department of Environmental Protection
From: Harold Cox, Chief Public Health Officer
David Ozonoff MD, BU School of Public Health
Sam Lipson, Environmental Toxicologist
Subject: Public Health Department concerns over the 784 Memorial Drive site
Date: March 24th, 1998
CC: Patricia Donahue, Site Management Section, DEP NE Regional Office

Summary:

- 1) The Cambridge Public Health Department concurs that testing for metals is warranted
- 2) A decision by the Massachusetts DEP to audit the site would be appropriate
- 3) Future exposure to metals and VOCs during construction should be considered

After consulting with nearby residents and several professionals in disciplines supporting the assessment of public health risk from chemical exposure, the Cambridge Public Health Department believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens of Cambridgeport that testing for several metals, specified below, be conducted on that portion of the 784 Memorial Drive parcel formerly occupied by the Dover Stamping Company. Though previous characterization of the site at 784 Memorial Drive appears to be satisfactory with regard to contamination from organic chemicals, no data has been collected elucidating metals concentrations. Since Polaroid has asserted that there was no generation of improperly contained metal waste during their occupancy of the site, the absence of metals data may reflect their intention to profile only those releases which are known to have occurred during that period.

Notwithstanding the reasonable assertion that activities undertaken by Polaroid would not have resulted in significant releases of heavy metals on this parcel, historical uses of part of the site suggest possible deposition of several regulated and toxic heavy metals. These previous activities, conducted by the Dover Stamping Company from early in the 20th Century until the late 1950s or early 1960s included metal plating, metal stamping, and galvanizing, lacquering and "japanning" (dark finish with carbon) of sheet metal. In addition, there appears to have been a foundry capable of producing brass, bronze and

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aluminum. Metals to be screened for should include, but not be limited to, mercury (Hg), chromium (Cr), lead (Pb), selenium (Se), cadmium (Cd), and thallium (Tl), reflecting the intensive metal plating and processing activity on the site. Furthermore, this area warrants screening for arsenic (As) because of the previous siting of an apple orchard within its boundaries and the possibility that arsenate was used extensively as an insecticide. These purported activities were indicated in historical maps included in the Response Action Outcome (RAO) generated for Polaroid by GZA (environmental consulting firm) but were not performed during any site assessment. Cambridge Department of Public Health and several consulting health and environmental professionals have agreed, after consultation, that metals sampling and testing should be carried out in that portion of the parcel.

Concurrent with the recommendation for further testing by this department, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has stated that it is reviewing the parcel at 784 Memorial Drive as a possible candidate for a DEP site audit. This action, if taken, would result in the categorical examination of the RAO released in 1994 for significant deficiencies which might prevent the proper assessment of public health risk associated with the site. It is the view of this department that this audit should take place and that it should result in a request for further testing for metals. It is reasonable to expect that metals would have been included in the regimen of chemicals originally quantified given such a well-documented history of metal-waste generating activities.

It is also the view of this department that the public health impact of the excavation of large volumes of soil from the site during future construction was not considered in the Risk Characterization included in the 1994 RAO. While it may have been reasonable to overlook the impact of such activities at the time, since no construction on the site was then anticipated, the impact of uncovering large amounts of soil known to contain small amounts of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and unknown concentrations of various metals should be addressed. The Cambridge Department of Public Health takes the view that a requirement for air quality monitoring may be reasonable, pending the analysis of further samples. If hazardous materials are found at sufficiently high levels, periodic air quality monitoring for airborne metals and VOCs during construction should be required. This would serve to safeguard the health not only of those residing in the near vicinity of the site, but also those working on the site during demolition, excavation and construction.

Finally, the Cambridge Public Health Department would like to draw attention to the unusually close proximity between the abutting neighborhood and the site being reviewed. While we are convinced that this site warrants further DEP consideration without reference to its placement in a densely populated area, this close vicinal relationship with its neighbors (in some areas no more than 30 feet) does add to the importance of all decisions made regarding this parcel.

Thank you for your efforts in assuring that this site is properly characterized.

Consent Communication #13

A communication was received from the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative (CNI), Stash Horowitz, transmitting a memorandum from Harold Cox, Chief Public Health Officer, concerning the Public Health Department concerns over the 784 Memorial Drive site.

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NO Action Taken.

In City Council March 30, 1998

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BY Councillor Insantafellon

4/6/98

Tabled on motion of C. Russell