**Environmental Advisory Council**

**Jefferson Hills Borough, Pennsylvania**

**April 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**Roll Call:** Members: Dave Graffam (new member), Joey Lynch, Rick Moore, Lorie Bartrug, Tom Donohue; Borough Mgr. John Stinner

Guest: Lisa Graves Marcucci, Environmental Integrity Project (EIP)

Introduction of New member – David Graffam, has served in various capacities for the Borough

Microsoft Teams Email forthcoming. His contact info: 412 650-0118; dkgraffam@comcast.net

**Benzene in Ambient Air:** Guest Speaker: Ms. Lisa Graves Marcucci

Lisa briefly described the purpose and structure of the EIP. The EIP is primarily staffed with attorneys. Their work is focused on complicated permitting, specializing in the Clean Air Act seeking proper enforcement of permits. However, they also do other environmental work such as oil and gas, etc. They engage with communities in affected areas, such as the Mon Valley.

Lisa:

In fall of 2021 EIP responded to local resident complaints of burning eyes and sore throats and decided to place EPA-approved benzene passive samplers at certain properties in the area. (See EIP letters of Dec. and Feb, 23). They have spiked 3 times since installed in Dec. 2021. Refineries are required to have fence-line monitoring at their property. 9µg/m3 is the activation alert for refineries where they would have to remediate that level. Coke plants are not currently required to have fence-line monitoring for benzene.

John asked: Will benzene still be released from the coke plant once it is closed.

Lisa: Likely the permitting agencies will have a step down process but this is a good question that should be asked now.

The goal is to have this fence-line monitoring at U. S. Steel and remediate the issue if unacceptable levels are detected similar to refineries. The monitors spiking now are two in Glassport and one in Clairton. EIP has requested EPA to Inspect, investigate, and enforce.

The Allegheny County Health Dept. (ACHD), who has primacy for permit enforcement, has known about the benzene spikes for awhile and hasn’t done anything so that is why EPA is being approached. Federal rule-making likely would be required to force coke-making to install fence-line monitoring but EPA still has legal authority to step in with a chronic health issue until new rule-making occurs. Lisa maintains this is the push to make things happen.

John said: If EPA is falling short, how do we engage with them? We have to ask how can we collaboratively with federal and state elected officials see a quicker response to these concerns as opposed to only the local borough seeking action. These elected representatives have contacts at the local EPA to respond to issues raised by the public. This is typically the best way to address these issues. John cautioned that since Fetterman’s office is new and still staffing up; Casey’s office would be the best route to obtain a quicker action path. Lisa: We’d like their (Senators) help in how to phrase our request to the EPA.

Lisa noted that (ATSDR) Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has stepped in to do health assessments in the Mon Valley but they are just commencing their setup.

There are two benzene monitoring locations of EIP in Jefferson Hills.

John said he would prepare a draft letter on this topic for the EAC to review.

Rick: In another Benzene related exceedance, PA Environment Digest Blog has a group *Eyes on Shell* reporting on the Shell Cracker Plant, which is now in shutdown.

**New Borough Website and EAC Information**

* For future EAC information posting, comments were solicited for the design of the website. Lorie did a good review of the other EAC websites and liked the first one that was listed for its layout and there were good ideas for what was posted on some of the other sites. Tom suggested no more than two clicks from the Borough’s Home Page to reach the EAC page. Rick will reach out to Caitlin, who is coordinating the FRP for the new website with our ideas so far and check on the type of information and detail that’s she’s looking for.

**Terry Ackman** has resigned from the EAC effective immediately as he is attempting to launch a venture with another company using a renewable energy system. Several members of the EAC have expressed interest in Terry’s new venture. Rick will invite him to a future EAC meeting for a presentation.

**Marcellus Gas Drilling**

* Update on proposed Marcellus Gas Well pad in Union Twp. (Sarah Well Pad) - none

**Abandoned Gas Wells and Mines**

* Tom has received old mine mapping and contact information from Terry and will attempt to find abandoned gas well locations in the borough.

**Remaining EAC meeting dates for 2023:**

May 24

June 28

July – No meeting

August – No meeting

September 27

October 25

November 29

December – No meeting