



FULL BOARD MEETING Crosby Township Senior Center

Thursday, June 12, 2003

DRAFT MINUTES

The Fernald Citizens Advisory board met from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 12, 2003, at the Crosby Township Senior Center.

Members Present:

Jim Bierer
Sandy Butterfield
Marvin Clawson
Lisa Crawford
Steve DePoe
Pam Dunn
Glenn Griffiths
Jane Harper
Graham Mitchell
Robert Tabor
Tom Wagner
Gene Willeke

Members Absent:

French Bell
Lisa Blair
Kathryn Brown
Blain Burton
Lou Doll
Gene Jablonowski

Designated Federal Official:

Gary Stegner

The Perspectives Group Staff:

Douglas Sarno
David Bidwell

Fluor Fernald Staff:

Sue Walpole

Approximately ten spectators also attended the meeting, including members of the public and representatives from the Department of Energy and Fluor Fernald.

General Announcements and Ex-Officio Comments

Jim Bierer called the meeting to order. The Board approved the minutes from its May meeting.

Jim and Glenn Griffiths both thanked members of the site staff who had helped to organize the public tour held earlier in the week. Jim suggested that another tour be held when the site reaches closure. Jeff Wagner reported that an estimated 550 individuals attended the tour. Sue Walpole read a letter from Tony Calabrese who served as the Attorney General for the State of Ohio during the time of the Fernald citizens' lawsuit against DOE. Mr. Calabrese wrote that he regretted being unable to attend the public tour and thanked the citizens for their hard work in pursuit of the cleanup.

Doug Sarno explained that at the last SSAB Chairs meeting, DOE Headquarters requested that all SSABs develop "success stories" that highlight the benefits of the Boards. Tom Wagner stated that Headquarters was looking for anecdotes that would support the work of the SSABs. Doug reviewed three draft success stories for the FCAB, which focused on the Future of Fernald process, recommendations for a balanced approach to cleanup, and the original recommendation for an accelerated cleanup of Fernald. FCAB members suggested other topics that could be used to write a success stories for Fernald, including the use of rail transportation, use of cleanup dollars to address special nuclear materials, and the open relationships that have developed among Fernald stakeholders.

Site Update

Dennis Carr provided the FCAB with an update on site administrative issues and progress of cleanup projects. He announced that safety performance has improved recently, even as activities at the site have increased. He also announced that overall work at the site is ahead of schedule and within baseline costs.

Dennis also discussed workforce issues. A reduction of 60 salaried and 100 hourly workers is anticipated on July 7. He stated that 20 staff members had already opted to participate in the voluntary separation program. He also stated that a new contract had been signed with Atomic Trades, and negotiations with the guards union were just beginning.

Heavy spring rains delayed some progress at the on-site disposal facility (OSDF), but the clay cover has been placed on Cell 2 and the clay liner is almost complete for Cell 6. Dennis stated that the project should be able to get back on schedule when weather clears over the summer. In response to a question from an FCAB member, Dennis explained that the additional scope of the recently renegotiated closure contract would require construction of an eighth cell at the OSDF. He added that trailers from the production waste pits would eventually be placed in the OSDF, because it would be difficult and expensive to certify them as contaminent-free. All other trailers on the site will be shipped offsite for salvage.

Dennis stated that all remaining production facilities should be demolished, and the water tower should come down by early October 2003.

Dennis announced that performance at the Advanced Waste Water Treatment (AWWT) facility has improved, because the Waste Pits project has been pre-treating water before it is pumped to AWWT. The site has met its discharge limits for uranium, but it is spending a lot of time replacing resins in the ion-exchange system. He also announced

that a fitting had come loose recently on an off-site extraction well, resulting in a release of 100 gallons of water. The levels of uranium in this water was 44 parts per billion, which exceeds levels for drinking water, but soil tests showed no increase above baseline levels.

The Waste Management Project has nearly completed the blending of legacy waste with waste pits material. All together, there are fewer than 6,000 drums remaining in the Fernald inventory. Dennis also announced that the last restricted "red drum" had been repackaged for shipping. He stated that all repackaging should be completed in the next two weeks, and all remaining inventory should be shipped offsite by September 30, 2003.

Waste Pits Remedial Action Project Update

Dave Lojack reviewed a handout showing that 65-75% of the waste pits program is complete. He stated that although the schedule is aggressive, the project should be completed by the Fall of 2004. Mark Cherry and Con Murphy provided the FCAB with a detailed update of progress at the waste pits.

Mark provided an overview of the Waste Pits Remedial Action Project, which started processing materials in 1999. He stated that over the past four years, the project has matured and become more efficient. He reported that there are currently 220 people on the project, working 35,000 total hours each month, but the project has achieved a 0.88 rate of OSHA reportable incidents this year. Mark stated that the biggest challenge for the project is to stay vigilant on safety, because the workers are doing the same work every day. He noted that the excavation crew has not had a reportable injury in the past four years. In total, the project has loaded more than 5,000 railcars with more than 500,000 tons of material. Last year, 145,000 tons were processed, and this year the project has a goal of 180,000 tons. Production has been increased by shifting the dryers to a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week schedule and by adding more rail infrastructure. Mark noted that all the remaining material to be excavated would not have to go through the dryers, because it is close enough to the optimum moisture content for disposal at Envirocare. He also explained that during the summer, the site is allowed to ship slightly wetter materials, because some moisture is lost during transport and placement. Mark responded to a question about air monitoring by explaining that data from 65 monitors are examined every two weeks. After experiencing some problems in 2000, the project focused on reducing airborne contaminants and has achieved levels of less than one microgram of exposure at the site fence line.

Con reviewed the progress that has been achieved in each of the waste pits and displayed photographs of each pit. Pit 3 is more than 80 percent complete. Pit 1 is approximately 96 percent complete, and has been used to blend containerized waste this spring. Excavation of Pit 2 is approximately 56 percent complete. Work on Pit 4 was begun in the Fall of 2002, with removal of the cap. Excavation has already reached the bottom of one corner of Pit 4 and should be completed this year. The dryers have focused on relatively wet materials in Pit 5 over the past year, and it is now 33 percent complete. Con explained that the clay liners from beneath the pits would be characterized to determine if they meet the waste acceptance criteria for the OSDF. If they meet the levels, a ROD amendment would be completed over the next few months to allow their on-site disposal.

Con noted that the project now schedules routine downtime for the maintenance of the dryers. When the dryers were operated on a five-day schedule, maintenance could be conducted on weekends. Under a seven-day schedule, time must be set aside to

conduct preventative maintenance. He explained that the dryers were not operating over the past two weeks. Bob Tabor, who works at the Waste Pits project, reported that there was a lot of work to do, but it had gone smoothly.

FCAB members asked if there had been any additional incidents concerning lids being ajar on train cars returning from Envirocare. Mark and Con reported that staff members from Fernald had gone to Utah in order to elevate awareness of quality assurance among Envirocare workers, and there were no additional incidents over the past month. Dave reported that Union Pacific had shared information with the citizen who complained about the open lid in May.

Silos Project Update

Dennis stated that Fluor Fernald is still working with a Congressional staffer to add language to the Water and Energy Appropriations bill, which would designate the silos materials as 11e.(2) waste. This designation would allow the site to dispose of silos waste at Envirocare, rather than the Nevada Test Site. NRC and DOE have reviewed the draft language and indicated their support. The Congressional authorizing committee, which would need to approve the language, has also indicated that it supports this approach. The Army Corps of Engineers, however, has not yet provided feedback. Dennis expects the language to be approved by the end of June. He also noted that he, Terry Hagen, and possibly Gene Jablonowski plan to meet about this issue with the State of Utah on July 1, 2003. The designation of the waste would not be official until the FY2004 federal budget is approved.

Ray Corradi provided the Board with an update on recent progress at the Silos projects. He stressed that the project is moving forward, under the assumption that the Nevada Test Site could be the only disposal option for silos materials. This means the materials would have to be transported by truck. All facilities are being constructed to allow the use of trucks and railcars.

The Radon Control System for Silos 1 and 2 began continuous operation in May. This second "hot test" has demonstrated better performance than expected, so the project team does not anticipate a need for additional carbon beds. Ray noted that the bridge that will be placed over Silo 1 has been constructed on the ground and will be lifted into place by a crane in July. In anticipation of this construction, the "beanies" were removed from the domes of Silos 1 and 2. The beanies were cut into pieces at the waste pits and shipped off site for disposal. Silo 4 will be used to mockup the openings that will be used to remove waste from Silos 1 and 2. The sluicing operation should begin in the Winter or Spring of 2004. Ray stated that approximately a dozen shipping containers have been built and are currently undergoing DOT testing. Components of the machinery that will be used to move, fill, and cap these containers are being tested and constructed by vendors. A mockup of the full system will be tested in Oak Ridge in August of 2003. Ray also noted that DOE is reviewing the ESD for Silos 1 and 2.

Ray reported that the design is complete for the waste conditioning system for Silo 3. He also explained that DOT is testing the bags that will be used to transport this waste. The project team is preparing a response to the three comments received on the proposed Silo 3 ROD Amendment.

Gene Willeke asked whether the excavator, used to open a hole in the site of Silo 3, could also be used to break apart any compacted materials at the bottom of the silo. Gene stated that this would allow as much waste as possible to be removed using the

pneumatic wand. Ray stated that the pneumatic wand could possibly be attached to the end of the excavator to facilitate this.

CAT Report

Gail Bingham and Todd Martin of the Critical Analysis Team (CAT) attended the meeting and provided a briefing to the FCAB. Todd reported that bi-weekly conference calls have improved communications with the Silos Project Team. He noted that a one-month delay in the scheduled test of the full Silos 1 and 2 packaging system had allowed individual components to be tested and improved by the vendors. Todd reported that the CAT believes the Silos 1 and 2 treatment facility can and will work, although the CAT will continue to review some airflow issues. He also explained that the CAT believes that cost-of-schedule reporting could be used more effectively as a management tool for the project.

NRD Roundtable Follow-Up

Doug reviewed the Natural Resources Trustees joint status report, which must be submitted quarterly to the judge overseeing the Natural Resource Damages (NRD) claim. The report was very perfunctory and stated that settlement is expected "soon." Doug stated that this was not the impression given at the May 8, 2003 roundtable discussion. Johnny Reising stated that settlement language was drafted in the past, but negotiations are at a standstill until DOE Headquarters provides some guidance on the issue. FCAB members asked if that draft settlement is available for public review. Graham Mitchell stated that it is unlikely that the Trustees' lawyers would release any draft settlement language. He added that the FCAB should tell the Trustees what it wants to see included in a settlement.

Doug reported that the Stewardship Committee agreed at its last meeting that the FCAB should draft a letter to the Trustees that outlines the three major unresolved issues identified at the roundtable. The letter would not make specific recommendations for what should be included in the settlement, but would outline principles that must be addressed in a settlement. The Stewardship Committee also recommended that the letter be copied to the judge for the NRD claim. The Board agreed that a letter should be drafted, for discussion and approval at its next meeting.

The Board briefly discussed the need for a long-term steward for natural resources at the site. Graham stated that any potential steward would want to know that funding is in place to support ongoing stewardship activities. He also stated that relationships with potential stewards must be developed over the next few years, so they can see progress in the restoration of the site. The Board members discussed the pros and cons of the state, Hamilton County, a university, or a nonprofit organization acting as a steward. They also discussed the possibility of a new organization being founded to play the role of natural resource steward at Fernald. The Board agreed that several potential stewards should be pursued simultaneously. Doug suggested that a future Board meeting could be devoted to this topic.

FCAB Anniversary Celebration

Doug announced that a celebration of the FCAB's 10th anniversary would be held on the evening of Friday, September 12. The event will be held at the Fitton Center in downtown Hamilton. Fluor has offered to host the party, assisted by The Perspectives Group. Doug distributed a preliminary list of invitees and asked the FCAB members to suggest any other individuals that were integral to the work of the FCAB.

