

## NPDC / Skillman Village

### A Montgomery Township Community Project

Bulletin #2\* / February 8, 2007

***In the last several weeks, the Township of Montgomery has held a series of meetings about environmental clean-up and demolition at the NPDC site for VES parents, teachers and administration. In addition the Township has continued to meet with a Board of Education subcommittee. Two more public meetings are scheduled for next Tuesday, February 13, 2007. The first is for parents of OHES students starting at 12 noon in the Municipal Courtroom. The second is for all interested Township residents at 7:30 p.m. at the Otto Kaufman Community Center (see p. 4).***

***The Township is establishing a Community Advisory Panel with representatives from VES, OHES, MTEA, PTA, the Board of Health, Environmental Commission, St. Charles Borromeo and nearby neighborhoods. This advisory panel will work closely with the Township to review and assess health and safety concerns.***

***Following are some recent questions with answers. We appreciate the community's feedback and want to hear from you. For more information or to add other questions, first see the Township website ([www.montgomery.nj.us](http://www.montgomery.nj.us)) and then contact Tammy Garaffa ([tgaraffa@twp.montgomery.nj.us](mailto:tgaraffa@twp.montgomery.nj.us) or 908-359-8211 x207).***

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#### **When is the building demolition slated to begin?**

The Township does not yet have a demolition contractor, so the start date for demolition has not been set. The Township's objective is to select a highly qualified contractor this spring so that as much of the demolition and abatement work as possible can be done over the summer. The taking down of buildings cannot begin until certain steps first occur: the demolition contract must be put out to bid for a period of 60 days; the contractor must be selected; a Health and Safety Plan must be completed and approved by the Township; and a demolition schedule must be set in collaboration with the Township Engineer and with input from the Community Advisory Panel.

The demolition bid specifications have been carefully crafted such that only highly qualified bidders can earn the contract. The Township would like to have a contractor chosen by mid-April so that there is ample time to complete the Health and Safety Plan with input from the community, and so that full advantage may be taken of the summer break. Asbestos abatement must be done BEFORE a building is demolished. This abatement will take place under completely enclosed and monitored conditions, including negative air pressure. All buildings will be checked before demolition to ensure that abatement has been completed.

Additional public meetings will be held after a demolition contractor is selected and prior to the beginning of work so that residents can meet and question the contractor, and provide input into the Health and Safety Plan.

#### **When is the removal of the steam pipes starting?**

The removal of above-ground asbestos-wrapped steam heating pipes is a high priority due to their accessibility. The pipeline that crosses Main Blvd. east of the Village Elementary School and

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\* Bulletin #1 was the circulated as Backpack Mail and via email to VES and OHES parents on or about January 12. Future bulletins will be numbered.

heads south will be removed during spring break. All other above-ground steam pipes are located in the southern-most portion of this 256 acre property running east-west along the stream area. This additional portion of pipeline will be removed as soon as possible, perhaps as early as March. The pipes will be removed in sections by specially trained workers using approved methods under completely enclosed and monitored conditions. The method is similar to a pharmaceutical glove-bag so that no small fibers whatsoever are emitted. Entire sections of pipe, with its asbestos wrapping intact, will be double-wrapped, sealed, and trucked off site in completely enclosed cargo bins for proper disposal.

**Why can't the Township hire more than one contractor and get the demolition work done in the two-month window of school's summer break? Why can't all the demolition work be done in the summertime?**

Since the demolition work is expected to take four to six months, it is not possible to perform all of the work while school is not in session (e.g. during summer break).

Presently the school property is surrounded by a 256 acre property whose deteriorated conditions call for expedient and safe correction. As a matter of public health and safety, both to the Village School community and the general public, it is important that the remediation of those conditions and demolition of necessary buildings begin as soon as possible.

The Township is carefully crafting a program for demolition so that work progresses in an orderly and well-controlled fashion. **Assuming some aspects of the abatement and demolition can begin in late May or early June, the Township will work with the demolition contractor to make sure that as much work as possible is completed at the NPDC site over the summer when school is not in session.** The School Board subcommittee and Community Advisory Panel will have input into the demolition work plan, so that the schedule and work plan are as responsive as possible to concerns expressed by the Village Elementary School community.

Township officials and expert consultants are confident that through the careful selection of an experienced and highly qualified demolition contractor, the work occurring on the NPDC site while school is in session can be performed and monitored so as to ensure the safety of the Village Elementary School and the general public. The remediation, abatement and demolition need not interfere with the operation of the school.

Township staff and expert consultants feel strongly that demolition and abatement should be done under a single contract, rather than multiple, simultaneous demolition contracts. It is important for responsibility to rest with one company. The bidding specifications for the demolition contractor require the contractor to be experienced and specialize in demolition work that involves buildings containing asbestos, lead-based paint and other material subject to disposal and handling regulations.

The demolition contractor will be required to prepare a Health and Safety Plan that includes a complete summary of methods proposed to protect workers, the Village Elementary School students and staff, and the public during all investigation, abatement, and demolition work. The demolition contractor is also required to provide site security with respect to the demolition work. JM Sorge has been hired by the Township to monitor compliance by the demolition contractor with the terms and conditions of its work.

**Has a Phase 1 Environmental Audit been performed or if not, will one be performed before work begins?**

Yes, a Phase I/Preliminary Assessment and a Phase II/Site Investigation were completed in 1999 by Schoor DePalma on behalf of the State. Using the information from that work and from other studies and correspondence, Weston Solutions performed a more focused due diligence investigation in May 2006 in order to assist contract negotiations with the State. Finally, JM Sorge, Inc., on behalf of the Township, has reviewed all of the available environmental information about

the site, including the Weston due diligence investigation report, and has performed more site investigation of the buildings. All of the environmental documents are available for public review at the Municipal Building.

Prior to commencement of any work, Weston, with respect to the abatement of the exterior features at the NPDC site, and the demolition contractor, with respect to the buildings at the NPDC site, are required to prepare detailed Health and Safety plans which must be approved by the Township and various state and federal authorities. The Township has committed to keeping the Board of Education, teachers, administrators and parents involved in the review of these plans to ensure the safety of the Village Elementary School students and staff.

**Has a building-by-building inventory/investigation been completed?**

The State contracted with the firm Schoor DePalma to conduct a building assessment after the site was closed. This assessment contains detailed information on asbestos and lead-based paint in the buildings on site at NPDC. The study was completed in 1998 and is available for public review.

In addition, Township staff, professionals or consultants have looked at and in every building on the site several times over the past few years. Most recently, Township staff representing the Engineering, Construction/Code Enforcement, Zoning, Public Works, and Health departments conducted a walk-through inspection of every building on the NPDC property prior to the closing on January 23, 2007. No evidence of staining on the floors or other suspicious materials was noted. There was no evidence whatsoever that new, previously unknown hazardous conditions are present in and around the buildings.

Weston will inspect any building that may contain an environmental condition not related to demolition (fuel oil, paint, etc.). The demolition company will inspect and sample each building as required to obtain a demolition permit. Any asbestos found must be abated/removed in accordance with state and federal regulations prior to the Township issuing a demolition permit and prior to any demolition work being performed. An independent assessment of the completeness of the abatement will be done prior to any actual demolition work.

**What about the buildings that will remain and possibly be reused? Are they safe?**

There are 22 buildings that will not be demolished at this time; these buildings may be considered for adaptive re-use in the redevelopment of Skillman Village. In many cases, these buildings have historic significance or are considered to add to the expected "village" atmosphere of the new Skillman Village. These buildings are being carefully secured and sealed by the Township so that they are available for potential inclusion in the redevelopment planning. The Township will keep these buildings carefully "buttoned up" and subject to frequent police patrol. If any conditions inside the buildings require abatement, these conditions will be addressed at the time of redevelopment by professionals who specialize in adaptive re-use of historic buildings.

**Why can't the Village School be closed for the duration of the demolition work? Does the school have an evacuation plan in place?**

Yes, the school has a Crisis Management Plan that, in coordination with the Township's Emergency Operation Plan, addresses many issues in addition to any emergency situations that might arise in connection with the work at the NPDC site. However, given the scope and routine nature of the remediation and demolition activity, the Township and its professional advisors believe it is virtually impossible for an incident that would require an evacuation of the school to occur.

The nature of the demolition and remediation work to be performed at NPDC is proven and safe. Remediation and demolition activities anticipated for the NPDC property are routinely performed in populated locales throughout the country and do not warrant the temporary closing of the school. The remediation activity is considered low impact and operates under tight controls and within a small area. Demolition activity also is performed in a controlled way so that at no time will it impact

the students, faculty and staff of the school. All abatement and demolition work will be done by trained, certified and experienced professionals in compliance with exacting state and federal standards and in compliance with pre-approved detailed Health and Safety Plans. In addition, Township engineering personnel as well as consultants from JM Sorge will be involved in the day-to-day monitoring of all work being conducted at NPDC.

Additional safety measures will be put in place to provide additional reassurance to the school community. Weston, as well as JM Sorge will be operating multiple continuous air monitors to detect any airborne hazards. These monitors will be set to trigger at a level well below NJDEP-mandated limits to provide a conservative early warning system. In addition, all construction access and abatement and demolition activity within 300 feet of the property lines of the parcel of land on which the Village Elementary School is located will be prohibited while school is in session. These precautions will minimize visual and noise disturbance by truck traffic. The Township analyzed traffic patterns and areas of activity to be performed to establish the 300-foot no-work zone. Trucks will be thoroughly washed to remove dust and debris prior to exiting any work area. All truckload contents will be tightly secured. As part of the development of the demolition contractor's Health and Safety Plan, the scheduling and phasing of abatement and demolition work at the entire NPDC site will be addressed. The Township's Community Advisory Panel will be involved in reviewing this critical scheduling effort.

**Is the water in the school safe to drink?**

Yes. The water is "city water" provided by New Jersey American Water Company.

**What would have happened if the Township had not purchased NPDC?**

The Township of Montgomery filed a lawsuit against the State of New Jersey in 2005 to force the Treasury Department to either clean up NPDC or allow the Township to purchase it and take care of clean-up. This litigation could have dragged on for years with no action. The State made no secret of the fact that housing developers were expressing strong interest in purchasing the property from them as-is, with the intent to build as many as 1000 homes. The Township, with many peoples' help, intervened and applied strong pressure on the State to sell NPDC to Montgomery. The alternative scenarios, therefore, included either watching the continued deterioration and crumbling of the buildings on the NPDC site with the attendant risks associated with such deterioration or having the State sell the property to private builders who would have been free to address the clean-up and redevelopment of the NPDC, including all of the deteriorated buildings and known hazardous conditions, in their own way with little or no public oversight and input.

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## **NPDC Remediation Community Info Forums**

Montgomery Township is holding a series of community forums to provide convenient and productive opportunities for question and answer directly with Township officials, oversight consultants JM Sorge, & Weston Solutions Inc, which is in charge of environmental remediation

**TWO MEETINGS ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007**

**12:00 noon meeting for Orchard Hill parents** -- Municipal Building, Court Room (2261 Rt. 206, Belle Mead. Pease use lower (south) parking lot. Carpooling is suggested.)

**7:30 p.m. meeting for all residents** -- Township Committee meeting at Otto Kaufman Community Center, 356 Skillman Road (behind Skillman Post Office & just beyond and opposite the side entrance to high school) – all residents welcome.

These meetings will also be video-taped and aired on Channel 14. For further info, call Montgomery Twp. at (908) 359-8211 or [TGaraffa@montgomery.nj.us](mailto:TGaraffa@montgomery.nj.us). ***Thank you!***