

## Omya Community Issue Team – Plant Issues

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### October 4, 2007 Meeting Summary

**Location:** Maclure Library, Pittsford, VT

**Date:** October 4, 2007

**Time:** 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

#### **Meeting Attendees** (in alphabetical order):

Sean Alvarez – Omya employee  
Ed Eugair – Florence resident and local business owner  
Peg Flory – State Representative  
Dave Markowski – Florence resident and local business owner  
Jim Morale – Omya employee  
Jack Orvis – Florence resident  
Jane Orvis – Florence resident  
Kathleen Ramsay – Pittsford Town Manager  
Umberto “Pat” Rosato – Florence resident  
*Absent:* Ernie Brod – Florence resident

*Note taking:* Dave Thayer – CLF Ventures

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Issue Team co-facilitators Sean Alvarez (Safety Manager) and Jim Morale (Production Superintendent) welcomed the Team and provided short introductions on themselves, their jobs at Omya, and their families.

### **II. Issue Team Overview**

Jim and Sean provided an overview of the mission of the Plant Issue Team and their proposed expectations for the team. They then provided an overview of Team goals and structural issues:

#### Team Goals:

- Continue our efforts towards being a better neighbor
- Keep the community informed
- Receive feedback from the community
- Work together to resolve issues

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#### Roles and Structure:

- Omya staff:
  - Listen to all issues
  - Organize the meetings and develop the agenda (with input)
  - Provide information (or personnel) to address agenda items
- Community members:
  - Identify issues and provide information about community concerns for the team to consider
  - Share creative ideas for solving problems
  - Make a commitment to attend meetings
  - No expectation of work outside of meetings (unless volunteered)
- Decision-making
  - The Issue Team is advisory to Omya. However, the goal is collaborative work toward mutually recognized priority issues.
- Duration
  - Team agreed that an ongoing schedule would be the best way to operate over time.
- Frequency
  - The Team decided to try to meet in one month and make adjustments as needed.
- Communication
  - Notes of each meeting will be posted to [www.omyainvermont.net](http://www.omyainvermont.net) once approved by the team.
- Guests
  - It was agreed that guests at future meetings should be cleared by the whole team before attending.
- Three Issue Teams will ultimately be launched:
  - Trucks and Transportation
  - Verpol Plant operations
  - Hogback Quarry operations

Plant Team members agreed that these were acceptable practices for Team management.

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#### **III. Overview of Verpol plant operations**

Jim provided a short summary of Omya's history at Verpol and answered Team Member's questions about the origin (and pronunciation) of Omya's name. Team Co-facilitators showed a short movie about calcium carbonate mining and processing at Verpol.

One Team Member offered that the general perception in the community is that Omya's product – calcium carbonate – is toxic or dangerous, even though it appears in many commercial products. Another Team Member said she felt that Omya should do more to show the community that its product is widely used in common household products and is therefore safe.

Another Team Member expressed the opinion that Omya is a critical part of the local economy and that the negative quality of life impacts that it caused would likely exist even if another company or different industry took its place. Several Team Members concurred that the company was generally a good neighbor and had made strides in recent years.

#### **IV. Section 5 Overview**

Jim introduced the Section 5 study process Omya is undergoing, as mandated by the Vermont Legislature (see Appendix 1 for legislation). Jim explained how Section 5 will most likely relate to the Community Issue Team process, saying that the Section 5 study will be a resource for the Issue Team but that the Issue Team might look at issues or information that are beyond the scope of the Section 5 study. Team Members had questions about what the study would find and how the results would be shared with Florence and Pittsford residents. Jim explained that public information about the study was currently available online (at [www.omyainvermont.net](http://www.omyainvermont.net)) and also said that a community presentation would take place sometime in January 2008 once the Section 5 process was complete.

#### **V. Issue Inventory**

Sean introduced Omya's list of known neighbor concerns related to Verpol Plant operations. They asked Team Members to review the list and then provide additional examples of issues they felt the Team should address. Team Members confirmed the following list of plant-related issues drafted by Omya:

- Dust
- Noise
- Odor
- Tailings management
- Surface and stormwater management
- Light pollution
- Process related air emissions (particulate matter, SO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, CO, and VOCs)

In addition to the above issues, one Team Member brought up plant aesthetics as an area of concern. They pointed out that the plant did not blend into the surrounding

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area. Another offered that while the plant might be painted so as not to stick out as much, the aesthetic has steadily improved over the years. One Team Member mentioned trash along the road as a problem, especially near Keith's Country Store and down Depot Hill, but also thanked Omya for its commitment to clean up the area through efforts like Green Up Day. The group agreed that while aesthetics are an issue, they are not a critical problem affecting quality of life.

Noise was a focus of discussion during the course of the meeting. One Team Member stated that a high-pitch screech is audible throughout the area and is pronounced at night, especially on the ridges above the plant. Several members agreed that the impact appeared to depend on where one lived. Several Team Members felt that noise remained a problem even after years of complaints to the company. However, the group agreed that Omya has recently made a good faith effort to at least listen to noise complaints and work on the issue, even as the problem has not been solved.

Surface and Stormwater Management and Tailings Management were identified by several Team Members as priority issues because of their potential or perceived impact to public health. The Team asked that they be provided with more information about Omya's system and associated regulatory requirements for the management of surface water, stormwater and tailings waste.

### **VI. Prioritized Issues and Next Steps**

Team Members prioritized three issues:

- (1) Surface and Stormwater Management,
- (2) Noise,
- (3) Tailings Management.

Sean and Jim said they would return to the next meeting with more information for the team to consider these issues.

The team agreed that the next meeting should occur in November. An initial date of Thursday, November 8, 2007 was agreed upon.

In the meantime, Team Members agreed to speak with their neighbors to ask what additional issues they have that the team should consider. Sean and Jim will confirm the proposed meeting date with Team Members.

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### APPENDIX 1

#### **NO. 65. AN ACT RELATING TO SOLID WASTE FACILITY FEES, TAXES, AND CERTIFICATION. (H.532)**

##### **Sec. 5 STUDY OF CALCIUM CARBONATE**

In order to review and consider fully the need to retain the tax exemption under 32 V.S.A. 5953(7), the secretary of natural resources shall require Omya as part of its certification under 10 V.S.A. §§ 6605 or 6605b to finance and complete a study of the human health and environmental effects of Omya's mineral processing of calcium carbonate in Vermont. The secretary of natural resources shall require Omya to submit a report of the results of the study on or before January 15, 2008 to the house and senate committees on natural resources and energy, the house committee on ways and means, and the senate committee on finance. The secretary of natural resources shall require the independent, third-party research study to be conducted by one or more qualified laboratories certified by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP). In completing the study, the secretary of natural resources may authorize Omya to utilize previously compiled data subject to verification and validation of that data by an independent, third-party university or laboratory. The study shall include:

- (1) Appropriate site-specific bedrock, aquifer, and groundwater mapping of Omya's mineral processing facilities, waste disposal facilities, and surrounding area, such as three dimensional groundwater mapping;
- (2) Results from and laboratory testing of groundwater sampling from monitoring wells currently in use at Omya's mineral processing facilities, waste disposal facilities and surrounding area and any new wells identified as needed by subdivision (1) of this section;
- (3) A complete data packet of the laboratory testing, including methodologies, of the tailings or other waste produced from mineral processing of calcium carbonate at Omya's mineral processing facilities, waste disposal facilities, and surrounding area in Vermont;
- (4) A toxicological analysis of the tailings or other waste produced from the mineral processing of calcium carbonate at Omya's facilities in Vermont, including a specific toxicological analysis of tall oil hydroxyethyl imidazoline, other flotation reagents, their constituent compounds, and acetone present in the waste and an analysis of all chemicals present in the waste in accordance with U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines;
- (5) Study of dust to determine if Omya is the source of the dust in the area and if so to determine possible health and environmental effects;
- (6) Proof of compliance with any and all applicable quality control and quality assurance measures and protocols including those relating to data validation; and
- (7) Other research or data relevant to the human health and environmental effects of mineral processing of calcium carbonate.