

Omya Community Issue Team – Plant Issues

November 8, 2007 Meeting Summary

Location: Maclure Library, Pittsford, VT

Date: November 8, 2007

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Attendees (in alphabetical order):

Sean Alvarez – Safety Manager, Omya
Peg Flory – State Representative
MaryKaye Macaulay – Administrative Assistant, Omya (note taking)
Dave Markowski – Florence resident and local business owner
Jim Morale – Production Superintendent, Omya
Jack Orvis – Florence resident
Jane Orvis – Florence resident
Kathleen Ramsay – Pittsford Town Manager
Umberto “Pat” Rosato – Florence resident
Dave Thayer – CLF Ventures

Absent: Ernie Brod – Florence resident
Ed Eugair – Florence resident

I. Welcome and Introductions

Issue Team co-facilitators Sean Alvarez (Safety Manager) and Jim Morale (Production Superintendent) welcomed the Team to the second meeting of the Plant Issue Team. Sean explained the proposed agenda for the evening and asked Team Members if they had any changes or additions. No edits were made. The Team agreed that the meeting format would work and that it was adaptable for other meetings.

II. Old Business

Jim and Sean provided a short review of the previous meeting (October 4, 2007) by walking through the meeting notes, which were provided by mail to Team Members prior to the meeting. Team Members were asked if they had any corrections to the first meetings notes. The group maintained that the priority list was as discussed and the minutes fairly detailed the issues of that meeting. Since no changes were made to the minutes, the Team accepted them “as is” for posting online at www.omyainvermont.net.

III. Discussion of Prioritized Issues and Brief Overview Presentations

Surface and Stormwater Management

Jim gave a short overview of Omya’s surface and stormwater management. He provided one map outlining the stormwater flow paths on the Verpol property and

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another of the Section 5: Phase II process groundwater and surface water sampling locations.

Jim asked the team what specific questions they had regarding water management at Verpol. Team members had numerous questions about the management of surface and stormwater. Some of the questions in this discussion included:

- How often do the stormwater settling basins fill up? Do they overflow?
- What is the settling basin cleanout frequency?
- How much upkeep and maintenance do the settling cells require?
- What are the testing requirements at the settling basins?
- What is the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) monitoring frequency? Who does the monitoring?
- What are wells on Omya's property tested for? How often?
- Who pulls the samples? Who does the analysis?
- What is the long term plan beyond Section 5?

Additional detail and discussion with regards to these topics will be provided at the next team meeting.

The team was asked to define what most concerned them in regards to water management at Verpol. Team Members said they were concerned that water flowing from Verpol could pick up particulates from chemically treated marble and transfer them through ground absorption, via fissures and leaching, into the water supply of townspeople. Team Members wondered: "How can we be certain we aren't being contaminated?" When asked to clarify what specific compounds concerned them, Team Members pointed to treatment chemicals used in processing at the Verpol plant.

Jim explained that the Section 5 study process currently underway would provide important details to address some of these questions and asked that the Team to revisit this issue once more information became available.

Section 5 Study

The team talked at length about the Section 5 study mandated by the Vermont State Legislature. Several additional questions for Jim and Sean related directly to this process. These included:

- 1) What is Section 5 testing for? What is it not testing for?
- 2) How will Section 5 results be shared with the community?
- 3) Was there testing that preceded Section 5? What did these tests indicate about the impact of the plant?
- 4) Will there be ongoing monitoring once Sec. 5 is complete? What is the plan for testing? Who will determine the type of testing and procedure that will take place afterward?
- 5) How does Omya's water use affect or relate to infrastructure in Florence and Pittsford? Will people eventually have to get on town water because of Omya's impact?

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Jim explained that the Section 5 study would be complete in mid-January 2008, with the final results available soon thereafter. The team expressed the importance of having the results of Section 5 presented in a public forum that includes the independent consultants and scientists involved in the study. It was suggested that the Section 5 study results could be published in the Pittsford Town Newsletter, which is widely read in the community. Another idea offered was to have the Town of Pittsford co-sponsor a public forum in an effort to get the results and Omya's future testing plans out to community members.

All members expressed the position that, for Omya to build trust within the community, it was necessary that the groundwater testing and monitoring continue on after the conclusion of the Section 5 study. They also expressed the belief that the testing would need to be handled by independent professionals and that it be conducted on a regular basis (quarterly or biannually).

Team Members agreed that one of the most positive aspects of the current Section 5 process is its transparency. One member stated that, in his experience, Omya had been efficient and thorough with the water testing on its property. Other Team Members echoed this sentiment, relating stories of friendly interaction with Section 5 related consultants. Members agreed that the knowledge and professionalism displayed by staff taking samples in the field underlined the legitimacy of the Section 5 process.

IV. New Issues and Next Steps

New Issue: Sense of Community

A new issue raised at the meeting by a Team Member was Omya's purchase of homes around the Verpol plant. The Team Member explained that some neighbors are concerned about a loss of community ties in the area as a result of Omya owning many of the homes in Florence. The perception, the Team Member continued, is that these homes are vacant or less well maintained now that Omya owns them.

During the discussion of this comment, two issues appeared. First, what exactly is Omya doing purchasing these homes and what is the impact? Second, how can the company help the community rebuild strong neighborhood ties?

Jim explained that Omya owns properties around Verpol and rents them to employees at the plant, so the purchases benefit employees in the community. One Team Member pointed out that Vermont Marble once owned many homes around the area.

Regarding how the company might help improve the neighborhood, the Team discussed the idea of holding block parties to bring the neighbors together. Overall, the Team expressed interest in discussing this issue more and proposing new ideas for Omya to consider.

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Next Steps

The Team asked for clarification at the next meeting of several questions regarding the Section 5 Study (see questions above). Jim and Sean agreed to return to the next meeting with more information about the Section 5 process, as well as past testing and any future plans. The Team agreed to add the “Sense of Community” issue to the end of its list of prioritized issues, after (1) Surface and Stormwater Management, (2) Noise Management, and (3) Tailings Management.

V. Wrap Up

Although part of the original agenda, noise management and tailings management were not discussed during the meeting.

In closing, the team approved that the topics to be addressed at the next meeting will be split equally between Surface and Stormwater Management and Noise Management. The date set for the third Plant Issues Team meeting is Monday, January 28, 2008 at 6:00PM in the Maclure Library.