

## **Landfill capping could take 3-4 years**

DAILY NEWS, BY KATE SPINNER – 3/7/2002

NEWBURYPORT -- Residents made it clear last night that they want the Crow Lane Landfill capped, but they also want assurance that the outcome will benefit the city and not only those profiting from the capping procedure.

William Thibeault, owner of the Crow Lane property that was the city's landfill for many years, brought his engineer and his attorney to City Hall last night to speak to residents about his plans to cap the abandoned dump using construction debris processed by his company, New Ventures Inc. of Everett.

The Department of Environmental Protection requires informational meetings on landfill cappings to allow residents the opportunity to understand the proposed capping process and comment on the project. Starting today, residents have 20 days to submit written opinions on the proposed project to the project engineer and the DEP.

Project Engineer Steven Trettel of GZA Geoenvironmental Inc. in Norwood said the first phase of the capping process involves assessment of environmental conditions in and around the landfill. Water samples will be taken from adjacent wetlands and streams to establish baseline environmental conditions upstream and downstream from the landfill. Such assessment will continue throughout the capping process and for no less than 10 years following the process. An inventory of materials contained in the dump will also be established based on historical records, Trettel said.

Next, the garbage that has escaped the perimeter of the dump will be collected and placed back into landfill. Then, a 10 to 12 foot wide trench will be dug around the landfill without exceeding its existing footprint. The trench will be excavated, then filled with clean materials to act as a buffer and to provide access around the edge of the site.

The first phase is expected to take approximately three months to complete, with approximately seven dump trucks entering the site daily. Also, because, rainwater will flow off the capped dump faster than the current rate, swales will be constructed around the edge of the landfill.

The second phase of shaping and grading involves the trucking in of construction debris over a course of approximately 28 months. The debris deposited is an income generator for the project and consists of ground concrete, brick, wood, glass, plaster, and gypsum board. The second phase will involve 27 truck trips per day, five days a week, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The final phase of the project is the actual cap. The cap consists of four layers. The first layer of sand and piping allows methane gasses generated by natural decomposition processes to escape from the mound. The second layer is a 1/4 inch plastic membrane that blocks rainwater from leaching through the contaminated materials within the landfill. On top of the plastic, more sand is placed to allow for drainage. Loam and grass seed will top the sand.

Trettel said the capping system will be about two feet deep and will take about five months to complete, with the passage of about 22 dump trucks per day.

When all the processed construction and capping materials are placed on the surface of the existing dump, the elevation of the approximately 55 foot dump will peak out at 70 to 75 feet, with a three to one grade on the sides and a 5 percent slope on the top.

Thibeault said last night that he stands to profit from the deposit of construction debris on the dump, but that DEP regulations place a limit on his margin of profit. He said the DEP would allow him to earn a profit equivalent to between 10 and 15 percent of the total construction costs associated with the capping. Thibeault estimated that the entire process may cost him as much as \$3.5 million.

Some residents were skeptical of Thibeault's plans, asking whether the proposed capping procedure is in the best interest of the city. Residents agreed the landfill must be capped, but they encouraged the city to investigate the possibility of purchasing the land and capping the landfill in a manner that would have less traffic and noise impact on the neighborhoods surrounding Crow Lane and Low Street.

Residents also asked about the city's responsibility if future problems with the dump arise. Ward 5 City Councilor Brenda Reffett asked about the city's liability once the land is handed over to the city. Thibeault's attorney, Richard Nylén of the Boston firm Lynch, DeSimone, and Nylén, said the city assumes some liability for the materials placed in the landfill during the 1980s.

According to Thibeault, the city had problems with sewer sludge in the mid-1980s and asked former landfill owner George Marcellos to accept the sludge into the dump. A few years later, in 1987, the DEP ordered the dump closed.

Later, another resident asked about New Ventures' post-closure liability. Nylén said that the DEP will negotiate a post-closure bond with New Ventures to cover post closure problems if they arise. Nylén estimated that the bond amount required may reach between \$5 million to \$10 million. He said the bond could also last 10 to 20 years, and possibly longer.

In order to avoid problems in the future, residents also suggested that the city hire a consultant to monitor the design work, and the capping process.

In addition to liability and monitoring, residents were concerned about traffic. The majority of the traffic associated with the project results from the hauling in of processed construction debris.

Residents attempted to determine the minimum amount of construction debris that Thibeault could use to make the project profitable, but Nylén, Thibeault and Trettel all said that the amount of fill was determined by the footprint of the land and the estimated cost of construction coupled with the income allowable by the DEP.

Also related to traffic, Nylén suggested that the project -- which is scheduled to be performed over a period of three years -- may be extended over four years if residents express that desire to

the DEP. Nysten, Thibeault, and Trettel said that extending the project over a four-year period would reduce the concentration of truck traffic.

Mayor Alan Lavender said he would be interested to know how residents feel about extending the project over four years, because residents did not discuss that option during the meeting last night.

Lavender said he generally supports the project. "Basically, they're in the business to do this sort of thing. If we were going to do it, it would probably cost us a lot more," Lavender said.

Earlier this week Lavender said he took city residents to visit similarly capped landfills in Medfield and Milford. He said he was satisfied with the appearance of both. But the capped landfill in Medfield, which is very similar to the proposed end result of the Newburyport landfill, has not been converted into athletic fields. Lavender, along with several residents, said he would like to see something arranged so that the city could use the capped landfill for recreational fields.

Before issuing a statement concerning traffic and soccer fields to the DEP on behalf of the city, Lavender said the city needs to do some "hard thinking."

Once the public comment period is over, the DEP will revisit Thibeault's conceptual plans and either request that he make revisions or allow him to proceed with the development of final plans within 120 days. During the development of the final plans, another public comment period will commence, and if residents show enough interest, the DEP can hold a public hearing.

Conceptual plans will be available at the public library on Monday.

Comments on the project can be mailed to the following addresses: Steven Trettel, GZA, 1 Edgewater Drive, Norwood, Mass. 02062 and DEP Bureau of Solid Waste, Northeast Region 205A, Lowell Road, Wilmington, Mass. 01887.