

CITY OFFICIALS MEET WITH EPA, CONSULTANTS ON LANDFILL

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URBANA – City officials met Wednesday with representatives from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the City's consultant, Hull and Associates, to discuss the findings from landfill data collection over the past six months and to develop a plan for moving forward.

The city-owned landfill, located off Children's Home Road, opened in 1953 and closed in 1989. The City is required to monitor groundwater and landfill gas at the facility for a minimum of 30 years from the date of closure.

In 2008, the City stopped burning off methane from a gas collection system as the landfill was not producing enough gas to keep the flare system operating and required additional propane to work properly. In 2011, the landfill was capped to mitigate limited groundwater issues. At every step, the City has worked with the Ohio EPA to make sure the site is in compliance with state regulations to prevent and mitigate migration of both gas and groundwater contaminants.

"It all depends on where things are 'cooking' in the core when you're talking about the age of the waste and stage of degradation," said William Petruzzi, a professional geologist with Hull and Associates. "With landfill gas investigations, you are really looking at the composition of the gas generated from the degrading waste in the landfill and its relationship to the surrounding environs." Mr. Petruzzi indicated that liquids have not been encountered in the landfill, "so we can tell you the cap is working. While the cap impedes the infiltration of rainwater into the landfill and limits groundwater impacts, it also impedes upward gas migration causing gas to migrate laterally away from the landfill in some areas."

The EPA representatives noted that it is typically more difficult and costly to remediate groundwater pollution issues than to vent or exhaust landfill gas safely, and emphasized that residents who live in neighborhoods near the landfill are in no danger as the City will continue weekly monitoring with regular updates to the EPA. The City, with technical assistance from Hull, will be updating the explosive gas plan for EPA approval in coming months.

The landfill is adjacent to Melvin Miller Park and acreage owned by Urbana City Schools. The district purchased the land in 2004 with the stated intent of building classroom facilities; even though environmental assessments identified the landfill as a potential barrier to construction even before City staff brought the issue to the attention of the district's project planners in 2015.

Although the school could still build on that site with modifications to meet the EPA's recommendation of 1,000-foot distance from the landfill property line, district staff has opted to investigate an alternate site.