

Pig's Eye Dump Task Force

Notes for Pig's Eye Dump Task Force Meeting #9

Thursday, April 17, 2025

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Virtual and Lower Level - MPCA 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155

Members in Attendance

- Dan Scollan, Water Resources Ecologist, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Sam Paske, Planning Assistant General Manager, Metropolitan Council
- Jimmy Francis, Mayor, City of South Saint Paul
- Bill Sumner, Council Member, City of Newport
- Melanie McMahon, Executive Project Lead – Mayor's Staff, City of Saint Paul
- Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County
- Dave Magnuson, Waste Regulation Supervisor, Dakota County
- Caleb Johnson, Environmental Program Manager, Washington County
- Nathan Wallerstedt, Project Management Branch Chief, Army Corps of Engineers - Saint Paul District
- Kirk Koudelka, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- David Bell, Environmental Research Scientist, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)

Other Contributors

- Hans Neve, MPCA
- Stephen Mikkelsen, MPCA
- Corinne Stremmel, MPCA
- Jenna Roberts, Zan Associates
- Kara Van Lerberghe, Zan Associates

Presenters

- Hans Neve, MPCA
- Kara Van Lerberghe, Zan Associates

1. Welcome, introductions, agenda

Hans Neve (MPCA) kicked off the meeting, thanked everyone for being in attendance, introduced himself, and went over the agenda. Task force members and consultants followed by introducing themselves.

2. Re-cap previous meetings and next steps

Hans Neve (MPCA) provided a recap of previous meetings and reviewed the timeline that included three phases: education, decision-making, and documenting and review. He went over the future land use options, remediation goals, and potential remediation options.

3. Remediation options and cost estimates

Hans Neve (MPCA) went over the potential remediation options and their roughly estimated projected costs. He gave a background on trenching that was done at the dump in 2000 and what the waste looked like. He provided an overview on what kind of methods can be used to address waste including topics that have previously been discussed in task force meetings including pyrolysis, gasification, and incineration and why it would not be as effective to address Pig's Eye Dump waste. Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County) clarified if pyrolysis had carbon emissions and Kirk Koudelka (MPCA) confirmed that the processes do need a permit due to emissions. Hans went over what assumptions went into calculating the estimated costs for each remediation option including the waste disposal transportation costs. Dave Magnuson (Dakota County) asked if there was a conversion rate that was being used since landfills are charged by the ton and Hans confirmed the engineering team does. Victoria asked if they knew the fees from the landfills and Hans responded that they have not as these estimations are very preliminary, but a rough estimation is included in the overall projected costs.

4. Public engagement update and survey results

Kara Van Lerberghe (Zan Associates) started off by providing a background on public engagement efforts from 2024 and what messages the team heard from the public. She then went over the survey that was launched in 2025, how it was advertised, and the results. Overall, people were most comfortable with the site being restored as a natural area and least comfortable with industrial/commercial future use. People were most interested in seeing the site have a focus on restoration of the wetlands and preservation of wildlife and full removal of waste. She concluded by reviewing the demographic data that was collected by survey respondents.

Jimmy Francis (South St. Paul) asked if the survey results have been shared with Betty McCollum's office and Hans Neve (MPCA) responded that the report is still in draft form, so it has not been shared yet and Kirk Koudelka (MPCA) added that they check in with them periodically throughout the process.

A member of the public mentioned that creating a new lake would not be the same as restoring the historic lake for anyone who is less familiar with the site. Another member of the public asked about the maps showing different remediation options and the accuracy of where the creeks enter the site. Hans answered that the maps are not meant to be exact depictions, but they could touch base during the break to discuss. The member of the public asked if they have reached out to determine if there is any demand for more commercial or industrial uses at the site. Hans responded that they have heard some of the needs from the nearby Met Council water resource recovery facility and have done some outreach to other nearby industrial facilities. Another member of the public shared that they were pleased to see the results of the survey and that it is representative of the work that has been done so far to protect and restore the site. Another member of the public asked about the location of another nearby dump and Hans responded that they could touch base on the break about the maps.

Melanie McMahon (City of St. Paul) asked how the demographic data from the survey compared to the demographics of the neighborhood. Kara confirmed that the demographics of the survey were not representative of the nearby neighborhoods and shared that she would send out neighborhood demographics to review. Caleb Johnson (Washington County) asked about any official liaison process with the tribe and how that will be tied into the report process. Kara shared information on how Wakan Tipi has been involved in the public engagement process so far and Kirk added that they could involve their tribal relations staff. Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County) asked for clarification on whether the Pig's Eye Dump was part of the Superfund and if funding came along with it. Hans answered that it is part of the closed landfill program in Minnesota and Kirk

added that they will discuss funding options more at future meetings. David Bell (MDH) asked if there was any way to know how many people who answered the survey heard about it through flyering and Kara responded that they did not gather that information. A member of the public asked about why this site was not included in the 3M lawsuit and Kirk responded that they were identified as a responsible party for those other Washington County sites.

5. Break

The meeting paused for a 20 minute break. At the end of the break, Kara Van Lerberghe (Zan Associates) went over the demographics for the Battle Creek-Highwood area that was previously discussed during the public engagement portion.

6. Public comment

One member mentioned that they are more familiar with the other dump on the north side and suggested that the Pig's Eye Dump water plume could be collected and diverted to the wastewater plant for treatment. Hans Neve (MPCA) confirmed that there is another nearby smaller fish hatchery dump that is part of the Superfund program. Another member of the public talked about their experience walking around the site and asked if the waste from the wood chipping site and other trash would be addressed as well. Hans added that they are in the preliminary stages and have not gotten to looking at construction logistics and exact waste estimates. Another member of the public mentioned that the area is a designated park area and is in an area that should be considered for environmental justice. Another member of the public mentioned concerns for sewage sludge ash that was disposed of near the site and PFAS contamination. Hans confirmed that there are multiple sources of PFAS contamination to consider.

7. Discussion

Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County) thanked the team for the public engagement survey and was surprised by the amount of responses over the age of 55. She added that she has concerns about digging the waste and moving it to another neighborhood and the possibility of extracting anything from the waste. She would like their recommendation to be more than just digging up the waste and moving it and would like to find other ways to make improvements. Dave Magnuson (Dakota County) asked if there is asbestos and shared that there is a problem with mining landfills because of this. Hans Neve (MPCA) confirmed that there is asbestos in the waste. Kirk Koudelka (MPCA) asked if it was possible to get cross tabs on demographics and usage of what represents the community compared to who is participating. Specifically, if younger groups believe in something else. He was surprised that active use was fairly low. Kara Van Lerberghe (Zan Associates) confirmed they could pull that data and add it to the report. Caleb Johnson (Washington County) clarified that campgrounds are prohibited in a flood plain since that was mentioned in the survey. Melanie McMahon (City of St. Paul) asked how the task force report fits into the overall MPCA work on the site. Kirk responded that it will be helpful to create one vision and goal to guide MPCA work and build support behind it and gather funding. Jimmy Francis (City of South St. Paul) asked if the task force can we recommend the state of Minnesota start another landfill and if that would that help this project. He is of the thought that the site needs to be dug out completely since it is toxic and wondered if it would be helpful to discuss this as part of the recommendations going forward. Victoria responded that they should look at all options and that she doesn't see opening a new landfill being feasible and getting approval state level. She mentioned that the waste management act stated by 1991 there would be no unprocessed waste into landfills. Dave added that the dig and line option is a new landfill, it will just be located at the current site. Bill Sumner (City of Newport) added that as a member of the over 55 white group,

he was pleased to hear about the young people supporting this. He asked if it was possible to use the waste material as a deep foundation on highway projects and seal it with concrete roadways as a reuse option. Kirk responded that you would need to build a liner system and Dave added that it isn't a stable surface to build on. Kirk added that it would be helpful to investigate what the visions are for industrial use. Some of the options include expansion of the current lumber yard for future environmental needs or further expansion for the water treatment plant. Jimmy added that there could be a good case for Met Council expansion since their water resource recovery facility is a positive service to the community and environment. He added that he is not interested in new industrial uses coming to that site. Sam Paske (Met Council) responded that the Met Council land has infrastructure there that is helping protect the environment from flooding. They plan to eventually expand the water treatment plan on the currently owned Met Council land to meet the needs of the community. He added that there is infrastructure owned by Met Council that goes under the dump. Caleb mentioned concerns around the railroads lack of engagement in this process even though they have been reached out to. He agrees that the current facilities located on the site will have to remain there and it is important to be mindful of that. Victoria requested more information on the designated parkland and the boundaries. Kirk added that they need to talk through what other things they want to get information on so they can start to narrow down priorities to help dictate later conversations. Sam mentioned that the highest comfortability from the survey was the natural area use and passive use as close second and that it stood out that the public wants the material gone. He asked if there is a way to open the scope of what that means, specifically regarding moving the waste with the nearby barges and railyard and if it can go beyond Minnesota. Victoria added that she would like to figure out if they can make the waste less environmentally destructive. Melanie added that she wants to make sure they are clear about the difference between active and passive use. Dan Scollan (DNR) asked for clarification on if the Met Council ash waste that was previously mentioned during public comment was part of the dump or if that was located elsewhere. Hans confirmed that ash disposal was in a separate area on the Pig's Eye Dump. Victoria clarified if they are expected to make recommendations on funding and wants to make sure they address financial aspects and how it will be paid for. Jimmy asked if it is the role of the task force to find funding or just to provide recommendations. Victoria clarified that they don't need to identify the source but want to be careful not to point fingers to make sure it can move forward and that they need to state the cost and figure out how to fund it. Kirk added that they will spend a meeting to discuss funding and the possibility of new programs. The report can include recommendations for potential funding sources. David Bell (MDH) responded that he is interested in having those conversations to support whatever recommendations they include in the report so it can be feasible. Dave asked if the Waste Relocation and Filter option includes regrading and capping. Hans responded that that the cover would be what is currently there which is a permeable soil cover, and the area would not be regraded to add a slope. Dan asked if there is the possibility of a hybrid option between the dig and line option and the targeted waste relocation and filter. Dave responded that to slow infiltration, the site would need a slope and a synthetic liner to cap it. The site would need to be mowed, and trees removed to better prevent infiltration. Kirk responded that they can look into an option that would reshape and cap the site. Dave added that he doesn't think the targeted waste relocation and filter will be effective enough for the effort. He mentioned that Dakota County does not want the waste to come to their landfills. Anything short of the dig and line option will not prevent infiltration into the future. He feels the dig and line is the only reasonable option and is not a proponent of the dig and haul option since it is in a very industrial area and is very complicated.

Nathan Wallerstedt (Army Corps of Engineers) asked if there was any benefit to just capping it. Dave responded that it would be cheaper and the waste that is currently in the water has been there for many years and has

likely already released most of the contaminants. Capping it would prevent water from flowing through the waste higher up and entering groundwater. It would not eliminate contamination, but it would reduce it. Kirk added that this site is challenging because water is coming up to where the enhanced cover is. Dave responded that he wouldn't recommend it for the site, but it would be better than the targeted waste relocation and filter. Kirk mentioned that the Dig and Line could include some natural area and walking trails, but the landfill would be quite tall. There was discussion on needing to look into airport restrictions due to the potential height of the landfill. Melanie asked if the operating and ongoing costs would be done by the MPCA. Kirk responded that the projected costs depend on who operates the facility, and they would have to find a funding source. Melanie mentioned that they can't assume the city can cover the cost so want to be mindful of who is operating and paying for it. Kirk mentioned that the dig and haul no backfill has more upfront costs to remove it, but less long term costs compared to the dig and line. David clarified if they were hoping to only put forward one recommendation or a couple. Dave shared he has no interest in presenting the targeted waste relocation and filter and the task force agreed that looking into a hybrid option of targeted waste relocation and filter and dig and line may be more useful. Nathan would like to include some incremental steps to make it better in the report. Dave added that the dig and haul with backfill is too high cost for recreation land and is interested in taking it off the table. Kirk added that it is up to the group to decide if they make one recommendation or multiple. Victoria shared that when they look at funding, it would be very challenging to get funding to move the waste to another location if they can't make it less toxic. She would like to come up with a recommendation that is considerate of the environment. Melanie added that it could be beneficial to recommend a new funding source, and that this is a larger issue than just Pig's Eye Dump so there needs to be more solutions. Victoria added that this isn't feasible for the county taxpayers and Melanie related it back to the resources of the residents based on the demographics in the area. Victoria added that she doesn't see this coming from little pots everywhere and that they need to expand an existing funding source or redirect. Kirk added that the dig and haul with or without backfill and the dig and line provide the same level of protectiveness from an agency perspective. Looking at the results, the backfill option is only if they want active recreation which does not show through in the survey results. He would be supportive of the concept of eliminating some options. Dave shared that he doesn't think targeted waste relocation will work. He added that dig and line has the lowest cost that meets the needs. Toxic chemicals are going to come off the waste and it will be challenging to move it due to the methane, asbestos, and moisture. Caleb asked about the feasibility of the dig and line with the frequent flooding and Dave responded that you would add infrastructure to prevent flooding. Kirk added that they have looked at historical flooding information, knowing the future will be wetter and with more intense situations. Hans added that there is a flood risk during construction as well. Victoria asked about the timeline of the dig and line and the team responded that it is estimated at about 10 years.

Hans started wrapping up the meeting by asking each task force member how they are feeling and what additional information they need. Jimmy responded that he is interested in funding discussions, industrial uses, and recommending more than one option in the final report. Kirk added that they would focus on industrial uses that still have an environmental benefit. Victoria stated that she is interested in suggesting around two scenarios and wants to focus on what they are trying to accomplish. Dan shared that it was helpful to narrow down some options and that the backfill isn't in line with the goals of the public. He has questions about the two remaining options on how to haul and logistics for the dig and line. Sam shared that he would be happy to share more information on the future of the site, would like more clarity on tribal involvement, and appreciates the additional clarity on what the public wants. Dave appreciated how everyone is listening to the regional impact and the public engagement survey. Kirk confirmed that they could look into more information on the enhanced

cover with the task force. Bill shared that he would like to see how the funding compares to the environmental impacts. He suggested putting together a balanced sheet of two options. Caleb is interested in seeing how rail/barge options to move the waste and lower the cost, what green energy technologies can be a value add if the green mound is there, and if wood yard remains and commercial remains are there wood recovery or other sustainability options to look into. Melanie shared that the public engagement was helpful and emphasized that there is no special pot of money for this, so looking at potential future uses, and funding will be helpful. David seconded the idea of having around two options and hopes to get into a little more detailed discussions on funding, concerned about the size of the hill, and the possibility of a hybrid option. Nathan responded that the survey was great and helped the task force focus in, looking forward to funding discussions, and thanked the task force for the helpful discussion.

8. Adjourn

Hans Neve (MPCA) adjourned the meeting.