

1 NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND

2 SOUTHWEST DIVISION

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N00296.003324
MOFFETT FIELD
SSIC NO. 5090.3.A.

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10 TRANSCRIPT OF THE PUBLIC MEETING
11 REGARDING SITE 27, NORTHERN CHANNEL

12 AT THE FORMER NAS MOFFETT FIELD

13 Mountain View, California

14 Thursday, May 20, 2004

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Transcript of the public meeting held by
the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest
Division, at 500 Castro Street, City Council
Chambers, Mountain View, California, from 7:30 to
9:00 p.m., Thursday, May 20, 2004, before
Deirdre F. Cram, C.S.R. 9339.

1 THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2004

7:30 P.M.

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MR. WEISSENBORN: Good evening. I'm

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Rick Weissenborn, as you can see, not Andrea

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Espinoza. Andrea had family medical emergency and

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could not come up tonight.

7

It's 7:30 on the 20th of May, and I would

8

like to start the meeting regarding Site 27 at the

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former Naval Air Station Moffett Field. I'd like to

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go through a couple of logistical, administrative

11

issues.

12

If you didn't pick up copies of the

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handouts, they're on the table over here. If you're

14

interested in getting a regular mailing regarding

15

information about what's going on at Site 27, as well

16

as other sites at Moffett Field, please sign in, and

17

we'll add you to our mailing list.

18

The business part of the meeting, the

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restrooms, in case you didn't notice, are out

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directly across the hall, Men's to the right and

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Women's to the left. The City of Mountain View has

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requested of us that there be no food or drink in the

23

Council Chambers. We've been able to use the

24

facility quite easily, and that's basically a

25

no-big-deal issue. If you have food or drink, please

1 take it out.

2 As I said, I'm Rick Weissenborn. I'm the
3 lead remedial project manager for Moffett Field. The
4 former Naval Air Station Moffett Field, we're calling
5 it Moffett Field tonight. I'd like to introduce
6 some of the people that have been working on the
7 remedial investigation/feasibility study and the
8 proposed plan.

9 Scott Gromko is the remedial project
10 manager for the Navy's Southwest Division. We'll
11 hear more from Scott in just a couple of minutes. We
12 have Lee Saunders in the back of the room. He's the
13 public affairs officer for the Navy.

14 We have Adriana Constantinescu, with the
15 Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Lida Tan,
16 of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.
17 There's other Navy contractors, Navy personnel here.
18 We're not going to introduce them.

19 We also have some restoration advisory board
20 members here. The Co-chair isn't here. Maybe he'll
21 come in a few minutes. The RAB is a means of public
22 participation and holds regular bimonthly meetings.
23 Members find out what's going on, and offer advice,
24 suggestions from the community.

25 Tonight's meeting is being held as a

1 CERCLA requirement, and now I can't make the slides
2 move. We need to, under the CERCLA process, formally
3 present the information on what the proposed plan
4 or recommended remedial alternative for the
5 CERCLA Superfund site is. Site 27 is the
6 Northern Channel, as you probably found out outside.
7 We need to also offer this opportunity for
8 comments from the public. We're about halfway
9 through the review period. We'll give you some more
10 of those details in a minute.

11 What we have on the agenda is, briefly,
12 about ten minutes of what I'm doing now. The
13 introduction, why are we here, what are we going to
14 do. About a 15-or-20-minute presentation on the
15 Site 27 history, what's been done, what's proposed.
16 And then we'll have almost an hour, longer, if we
17 need longer, for the comment period. We're here
18 until everybody that has something to say has said
19 it. 9:00 p.m., up here, is the adjourn time. As I
20 said, if it's longer, it's longer. We'll be here
21 until nine o'clock.

22 A couple of the things I would like to go
23 through. First, if you have a comment, and you're
24 uncomfortable stating it, coming up and speaking into
25 the microphone, that's fine. We'll take written

1 comments. There is a comment sheet in the proposed
2 plan. There's comment sheets available there and
3 outside, if you want to pick one up when you leave.
4 They look like this. I realize it's a real poor
5 visual aid. You can't see it, but this is the
6 comment form. You can write on it. You can send an
7 e-mail to Andrea. You can fax it. The numbers are
8 provided on the form.

9 Or you can present oral comments tonight.
10 If you would like to do that, there's green speaker
11 request cards. We've got five minutes scheduled for
12 each person. If we need longer, as I said, we're
13 real flexible.

14 If you do have comments to make orally,
15 you're going to have to speak into the mike here.
16 The set-up is we have a court reporter, and we have
17 an audiotape running. This is part of our
18 administrative record for the CERCLA action. We have
19 to document all of this, and that's the method that
20 we're choosing to do that.

21 A little background information about what
22 we're doing. The former Naval Air Station Moffett
23 Field, as you're aware, was transferred to the
24 National Aeronautics and Space Administration in
25 1994. It was an active Navy base from about 1935,

1 roughly, and I'm not going to try to get exact dates
2 right now.

3 It was closed on the Base Realignment
4 Closure Program, which was an economic move by the
5 Department of Defense, driven by Congress, to
6 consolidate and reduce the budget for capital on real
7 properties. Right now, it's the home of the NASA
8 Ames Research Center. They have, basically, a
9 research campus community plant, and the air field,
10 as far as we know right now, will serve as a federal
11 air field for quite a while.

12 There is a Navy cleanup program that is
13 growing, essentially, nationwide. Nationwide, all
14 the closed Navy bases, and there are a few, have to
15 address their environmental contamination. The
16 active bases have similar programs. They are being
17 more aggressive than -- the Navy is being more
18 aggressive now than we were in the past to clean up
19 faster and prevent -- boost prevention.

20 What I would like to do now is turn it
21 over to Scott Gromko, who will tell us a little bit
22 about the history of the site and his background.

23 MR. GROMKO: Thank you. Once again, my
24 name is Scott Gromko, and I'm the remedial project
25 manager for Site 27. I prepared a brief summary of

1 the proposed plan. It highlights some of the key
2 points that are stated in this proposed plan.

3 To do that, I would like to just talk a
4 little bit about the background of the site, give you
5 an idea where the location of the site is, some
6 history of the site and the documents that have been
7 prepared for the site. Then I'll get into the
8 proposed plan, and in the proposed plan, I'll talk
9 about how we developed our cleanup alternatives and
10 how we came up with our preferred alternative.

11 If I could direct your attention to the
12 overhead over here, Site 27 is located in the
13 northeast corner of the former NAS Moffett Field. If
14 you're looking -- this is Highway 101 down here, and
15 this is Hanger 1, probably the most visible feature
16 of Moffett Field.

17 Site 27 consists of the Northern Channel,
18 which is this long yellow line that extends basically
19 through the middle of the slide. It includes the
20 berms of the Northern Channel, the sediment in the
21 Northern Channel and a debris pile located at the
22 west end of the Northern Channel.

23 The site also includes the associated
24 ditches that drain into the Northern Channel, or the
25 tributaries, and those are the Marriage Road Ditch,

1 the East Patrol Road Ditch and the North Patrol Road
2 Ditch.

3 A little background on the site. The site
4 is used for stormwater control. It's very important.
5 It moves all of the stormwater from, basically, the
6 east side of the runways, from the runways here, off
7 the base to prevent flooding. As such, the sediment
8 in some of the soils at Site 27 have been
9 contaminated, and that's due to the historical
10 activities by the Navy and NASA. Spills may have
11 occurred back when the site was being used by the
12 Navy, and those spills, from leaky transformers or
13 other contaminants, were carried to the site by the
14 rainwater, stormwater.

15 We know this because we've done a number
16 of sampling efforts out there. We had a really
17 extensive sampling effort in 2002 where we collected
18 over 4,500 samples, and those samples included sediment
19 and soil from the berms and the debris pile, surface
20 water samples, and we also collected tissue samples.
21 We collected fish and sampled them, as well as plant
22 tissue and some of the bottom-dwelling organisms, the
23 benthic organisms, such as worms.

24 Another feature of the site is that it has
25 a number property owners because the site is so long,

1 the Northern Channel. Those property owners includes
2 NASA, Cargill, Lockheed Martin, the City of
3 Sunnyvale. U.S. Fish and Wildlife, actually,
4 recently bought property from Cargill, so they have
5 property to the north of the site, and there's also
6 some, we think, Santa Clara Water District property
7 that's included in the site.

8 Some of the documents that include Site 27
9 are a stationwide remedial investigation, and this
10 document basically took all of the sampling data, all
11 of the chemical data that we know about Moffett, and
12 evaluated the cumulative health risks. For Site 27,
13 we found them to be low for humans.

14 From there, we did a sitewide ecological
15 assessment, and the purpose of that report was
16 to assess the ecological risks or the environmental
17 risks the site might pose. From there, we went
18 out and characterized the site. We wanted to
19 define the extent of contamination, where the highest
20 contamination is, and how far the contamination
21 extended. We completed a physical characterization
22 report in 2000.

23 After we analyzed that data, we realized
24 we needed more data so we could accurately
25 characterize the site. So we went out and did a data

1 gap investigation in 2002 to gather more data.

2 Now, all of this information was used to
3 prepare our feasibility study, and the purpose of the
4 feasibility study was to develop cleanup numbers so
5 that we would remove the risk the site poses to the
6 environment, and also to come up with a cleanup
7 alternative.

8 Now we're at the proposed plan stage. I
9 would like to direct your attention over here,
10 because we're following the CERCLA process, the
11 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and
12 Liability Act process, the federal process for
13 cleaning up hazardous waste sites. So it begins with
14 the identification of a site and the preliminary
15 assessment and site inspection, and then you move
16 into your investigation, which is the remedial
17 investigation and feasibility study.

18 And now we're entering the decision-making
19 process, where you identify the decision you're
20 proposing in the proposed plan, and you highlight
21 that decision in black and white in the Record of
22 Decision.

23 From there, you would complete your
24 cleanup, the remedial design and the remedial action,
25 and eventually lead to site closeout, removing it

1 from the NPL, from the National Priorities List.

2 The proposed plan, as Rick mentioned
3 earlier, is a public communications tool, we want to
4 hear from the community to find out what they think
5 of our proposal to clean up the site, and it
6 basically evaluates the evaluations and the decisions
7 that were conducted and then completed in the
8 feasibility study. It takes a rather large document
9 and boils it down into a fact sheet.

10 Tonight we're having a public meeting, and
11 this is the public's opportunity to come up and
12 verbally make comments about the plan. We do have a
13 comment period -- we're in the middle of it right
14 now -- that extends from May 4 through June 4. So
15 we're accepting comments through June 4.

16 Now, in the proposed plan, we identify the
17 chemicals of concern. These are the chemicals that
18 are known to be a risk, at the site, to the
19 environment. We also identify the most sensitive
20 receptor at the site, and by protecting this
21 receptor, we, in turn, protect other species out
22 there, all of the other species out there.

23 We also came up with a level that removes
24 the risk to these receptors, and that's on the right
25 side. We developed these numbers and these chemicals

1 and the receptors with the help of the EPA. This
2 isn't something that the Navy did on their own. So
3 we had a lot of help from their experts, as well as
4 our experts, to come up with these, and they do err
5 on the side of conservatism. So if there are any
6 assumptions made when we're developing these numbers,
7 we go with the most conservative assumption.

8 From there, that allows us to take a look
9 at what kind of technologies we can use to clean the
10 site up. Initially, we came up with 21 alternatives
11 on how we could address the risk at the site. We
12 added initial screening to those to file them down to
13 six alternatives. These six alternatives are
14 highlighted in the proposed plan.

15 From there, we used the CERCLA guidance to
16 do a detailed screening. We balanced our
17 alternatives against seven of the nine criteria
18 recommended or required by CERCLA to come up with our
19 preferred alternative. The last two of the nine
20 criteria are agency and community review and
21 comments.

22 So we kind of short-cutted this a little
23 bit, because we have been working with the agencies,
24 and we have been working with the property owners to
25 find out what their concerns are, and we have

1 addressed them. So they have accepted our preferred
2 alternative that we're proposing in the proposed
3 plan. Now, we just want to hear back from the
4 community.

5 From there, we'll highlight, in black and
6 white, our Record Of Decision of how we're going to
7 clean up the site, and that will make it a legally
8 binding cleanup.

9 Now, I would like to talk about the six
10 alternatives that we looked at. The first one is No
11 Action. That would mean we won't do anything at the
12 site, and we're required to do this under CERCLA,
13 because it's kind of a baseline, something to compare
14 alternatives against.

15 The next one is excavation of contaminated
16 sediments and off-site disposal. What that means is
17 we would remove the contaminated soil and sediment,
18 from the site, that's above those cleanup goals that
19 I showed you earlier, and transfer it to an approved
20 facility for off-site disposal.

21 The next one has two parts. One is to
22 excavate the contaminated sediments, treat it to
23 reduce the levels of PCBs, that's ex-situ
24 bioremediation; and also treat it to reduce the
25 leachability of metals with stabilization, and then

1 dispose of the contaminated sediment off-site.

2 This is a variation of the one I just
3 mentioned. It would exclude the treatment used to
4 reduce the PCBs. It would just focus on metals. So
5 it would excavate the contaminated sediment, treat it
6 to address the metals, and then dispose of that at an
7 approved facility off-site.

8 The fourth one has two parts also. This
9 one is to just, basically, leave the contamination in
10 place, but cover it so it's not mobile. So we would
11 use a geosynthetic cover to cover the contaminated
12 sediments and soil, and then put a concrete cap over
13 it. The second part of that alternative is to cover
14 the debris pile, which I spoke about earlier, with a
15 geosynthetic cover and concrete cap, and excavate the
16 contaminated sediments in the channels.

17 Now, we took a look at these, and we
18 compared them to the recommended criteria in the
19 CERCLA. As I mentioned, we looked at seven of them
20 at this point, and we used kind of a Consumer Reports
21 approach. For each of the alternatives, we compared
22 it against the evaluation criteria, and we either
23 checked it with a most favorable, an acceptable or a
24 least favorable.

25 Then, in the end, we counted the most

1 favorables, and came up with our preferred
2 alternative, which is Alternative 2; and that was the
3 one where we propose to excavate all the contaminated
4 sediments and soil and bring them to an approved
5 facility for disposal.

6 All of the information that I'm sharing
7 with you is in the proposed plan if you would like to
8 see it in more detail. This, in particular, is
9 well-illustrated in Table 1 on Page 7.

10 Again, our proposed plan preferred
11 alternative is excavation and off-site disposal, and
12 the reason for that is because it's the easiest to
13 construct, and it uses a proven technology. Some of
14 the technologies we looked at for reducing the PCBs
15 and metals in the sediment aren't proven; they're not
16 guaranteed to work.

17 So it removes the contaminated sediments
18 and soil from the site. There's nothing left in
19 place, where a cap would leave it in place. So it's
20 a one-time remedy. We wouldn't have to come back and
21 do any kind of maintenance to keep the remedy in
22 place, and also it meets our federal and state
23 requirements that are required by the State and the
24 EPA.

25 That concludes the summary of the proposed

1 plan.

2 MR. WEISSENBORN: Thank you, Scott.

3 Now we're into the formal public comment
4 period. As I mentioned earlier, if you would like to
5 get up and speak, let's have a green card. We'll
6 have plenty of time available for any comments. When
7 you do your presentation, to make a statement, please
8 use the microphone. I will stand here so you're not
9 talking to nobody, but it's pretty uncomfortable when
10 you're standing there, talking into the microphone.

11 This slide presents some of the highlights
12 of the ground rules we have to follow. If you want
13 to state a comment as a question, it goes as a
14 comment as it's stated. We cannot respond to
15 questions now.

16 Every comment, every question that's
17 presented verbally or written will be responded to
18 via the responsiveness summary in the Record Of
19 Decision. Before it gets there, we'll have
20 transcripts. Everything is being recorded
21 stenographically and audibly tonight. The
22 transcripts will be available at the Mountain View
23 Public Library, at the information repository, for
24 tonight's meeting.

25 Here is the address for Andrea Espinoza,

1 to make comments to. This is, again, on the back of
2 the proposed plan. It's on the comment sheet. There
3 are a lot of places to find this address, and if you
4 need it before you leave tonight, if you think you
5 may have something you want to write later, let us
6 know, and we'll make sure you have it.

7 One thing I would like to emphasize is the
8 comment period ends June 4th. This meeting is about
9 in the middle of it. That means some people have
10 been through everything, all the backup documents
11 they would like to look at. Others, you still have
12 an opportunity to do that. So your comments are
13 welcome. Verbally, orally, written, however you
14 would like to get them to us, please do.

15 If you send them by mail, just like the
16 IRS, midnight June 4th it's due. Different day, but
17 midnight works. Okay, now I will throw it open for
18 comment.

19 If you do have comments, we'll have
20 someone timing you, but as I mentioned, you've got a
21 lot of time. I will ask that, when you step to the
22 microphone, you give your name and address, and then
23 present your statement.

24 Libby, would you please come up?

25 MS. LUCAS: This was going to be a

1 question, but I guess I'll phrase it differently.
2 Basically, as I was speaking to staff before the
3 meeting, I'm concerned about the western pond turtle,
4 and it's very important that they not be fenced off
5 from their normal roaming grounds. They need sandy
6 banks to do their nesting in if you're going to have
7 a really viable colony. You may just have a colony
8 that is not reproducing young turtles.

9 So I certainly hope that, when you do your
10 habitat conservation plan, that you do it ahead of
11 time; and maybe that debris pile -- I'm not sure how
12 toxic it is -- but maybe that's where they're using
13 some of their refugia, their nesting capability.

14 So I think it's very important that you
15 check out all the necessary aspects of their survival
16 before you do anything as far as removing something
17 that may be a little toxic, but it may not a problem
18 to them. It certainly would be beneficial to leave
19 them some survival capability, because as things get
20 more and more civilized -- I mean, the golf course
21 and everything else -- they're going to have fewer
22 and fewer options; and since this is the one pond
23 turtle colony in Santa Clara County that's surviving,
24 it's terribly, terribly important that everything
25 that you can do to keep this group of turtles viable

1 is very, very essential, I think.

2 I guess my other thought would only be if
3 there was any way to vacuum out the toxic sediments
4 out from under the cleaner ones on top; but I guess
5 you obviously have thought of every possible option,
6 and that would not be feasible. So I guess I won't
7 even think about that.

8 That's it. Thank you.

9 MR. ECKERT: I guess all my comment is
10 based on what I've been reading today and what we've
11 heard in the past. So far, I feel that the Navy is
12 doing the right thing.

13 One of my concerns is, when they pick up
14 and move large amounts of material that is already
15 hazardous, that it be disposed of in a safe way so
16 that doesn't leave a problem someplace else.

17 Other than that, I think that you've got
18 the right idea and are doing the right thing, and
19 I'll continue to support you on it.

20 MR. WEISSENBORN: Could I get you to state
21 your name, please, for the record?

22 MR. ECKERT: Richard Eckert.

23 MR. WEISSENBORN: Thank you.

24 As I mentioned earlier, we'll be here
25 until nine o'clock if you want to go back out and

1 look at the displays or discuss it outside, think
2 some more if you want to make a comment. We'll be
3 here until nine o'clock. I'm not going to stand up
4 here and be real quiet, and you sit right there and
5 be real quiet. We have lots of time left if you want
6 to go out and look at the displays or discuss it
7 outside.

8 Another option we can offer, if you have a
9 concern, if you want to make the statement to the
10 court reporter, it will be on the record, and you
11 won't be forced to speak into the microphone.

12 As I said, we're here until nine o'clock,
13 if you want to go out and look at the displays,
14 again, maybe new questions come up. We can answer
15 questions outside. In here, in the formal meeting,
16 we can't. Maybe that will help you if you have
17 concerns. Thank you.

18 MS. CONSTANTINESCU: Good evening. I'm
19 Adriana Constantinescu, engineering geologist with
20 the State of California San Francisco Bay Regional
21 Water Quality Control Board, and as you could see on
22 one of the slides presented tonight, this project and
23 the proposed plan has to receive the State
24 acceptance.

25 The State Water Board has been

1 participating in this project from the beginning,
2 reading all of documents presented from '96 until
3 today; and not only, I will go back with the
4 historical involvement of the State Water Board in
5 this project with the first cleanup order issued by
6 the Water Board back in time in 1985.

7 Tonight, as a conclusion, and as the
8 project manager overseeing Moffett Field, and
9 specifically Site 27, Northern Channel, I'm
10 presenting the State acceptance of the proposed
11 alternative, Alternative 2, first of all, because
12 it's protective to human health and the environment,
13 and not at the end because it will provide a
14 permanent technical solution to the environmental
15 problems at Site 27.

16 Thank you for your attention. Thank you.

17 MR. WEISSENBORN: It is nine o'clock, and
18 I will now close the public meeting regarding
19 Site 27, the Northern Channel, at Moffett Field.

20 (Time noted: 9:02 p.m.)

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CTO: 0069
LOCATION: Moffett Fed Airfield

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Neil Hart, Program Manager

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