

Tonawanda News

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Possible health issues may exist at town landfill

By Dan Miner

Muted murmurs have turned into outright concern for the health of residents living near the Town of Tonawanda landfill.

Though the Army Corps of Engineers has said there are not dangerous levels of radiation at the site, residents and officials in the City of Tonawanda voiced their worries Tuesday that uranium and americium left from the United States' early atomic energy program has and will continue to cause cancer and other health problems unless something is done.

"You guys have been dumped on and its tragic," ██████████, a Town of Tonawanda-based activist, told the council. "I would appreciate it if you would consider the cancer aspect of this issue."

█████████ came to the meeting with ██████████, a professor of law at Niagara University, and ██████████, a Porter resident and member of the state Advisory Council on Children's Environmental Health and Safety. Both said they will help the city with the issue.

The site is currently being investigated by the Army Corps of Engineers for radioactive contamination from materials dumped by the federal government during it's early atomic energy program, ██████████, ██████████, project manager for the Army Corps at the landfill, has said. Minimal traces of radioactivity have been found.

█████████ has said there is no evidence of radioactive dumping and not enough radiation at the site to violate Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.

But increasingly, city officials doubt reports that the landfill doesn't pose a health risk.

"It's a real mess," said City of Tonawanda Mayor ██████████. "There's no question in my mind the people of this community have had a bad set of cards dealt to them."

By the meeting's end, it was clear city officials take the issue seriously, but questions arose as to how they will proceed. A public meeting involving city and town officials and representatives from the Army Corps and the state Department of Conservation is scheduled for early February in the Tonawanda High School gym.

"Residents want answers and they want to see some action done," Councilman Rick Davis said. "I would hope we pack that auditorium."

██████████ said it is unfortunate the city has to rely on outside information to gather information for them.

“The more the talk goes, the more we hear, the more concerned we get,” he said.

The city should follow ██████████ lead and formulate a plan and direction for themselves and residents, said ██████████, vice chairman of the Tonawanda Housing Authority Board.

Contact Dan Miner at 693-1000, Ext. 115.