



CITY OF TONAWANDA: Leaders meet with DEC

By Dave Hill/hilld@gnnewspaper.com
The Tonawanda News

— There are several developments on the Town of Tonawanda landfill front.

City of Tonawanda officials met for over an hour Thursday with representatives from the state Department of Environmental Conservation, the agency overseeing the landfill construction work being done by a town-hired contractor.

Mayor Ron Pilozzi, Council President Carleton Zeisz, 4th Ward Councilman Rick Davis and Chris Thomas — co-chair of the group CURE, or Clean Up Riverview's Environment — demanded that DEC officials alleviate the problems residents have been complaining about, including dust kicked up from the ongoing work and the vibrations causing many homes to shake, even damaging some foundations. "We received assurances that the quality of life issues...will be addressed very soon," Davis said. He said residents will notice a difference hopefully within a few weeks.

"It's a construction site, but there are ways and means to go about controlling dust and the shaking of residents' homes," he said.

On another front, there are plans in the works for city officials to meet with representatives from the DEC and the Town of Tonawanda once the town's new supervisor is elected.

City officials also recently explored a new avenue to pressure the federal government into full remediation of the landfill. Davis has reached out to Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-Fairport, for help, this time to seek her intervention in obtaining an Environmental Protection Agency grant that would provide testing on residents' properties in and around the landfill and Riverview Elementary School.

"After speaking with a representative at the EPA, this is a course of action that, to this day, hasn't been explored," Davis stated in a press release.

"It's one avenue that I didn't know existed, and we'd be fools not to explore it," he said. "Everyday that passes is another day that residents of the Riverview Heights area and the students and faculty of Riverview Elementary School have to live with the ineptness that is this landfill and the government agencies that control it."

He is asking Slaughter to step in because the grant is available only to charitable organizations, unless a member of Congress requests the grant.

In addition, Davis and Zeisz — who are both seeking re-election this fall — have asked the New York State Health Department for an update on the cancer study they requested several months ago. The two councilmen are also going to be asking the rest of the council members for their thoughts on the possibility of hiring a private company to do soil testing on properties near the landfill.

"Our goal is to evaluate whatever steps are necessary to have the landfill cleaned up prior to capping," Zeisz said. "This includes removing the uranium wastes. To address resident concerns for their health, we have been pushing for additional testing on home sites and basements."

Contact reporter David J. Hill at 693-1000, ext. 115.

Copyright © 1999-2006 cnhi, inc.