

***Special Report:***  
**Harrison Township Environmental Commission**

**Henry Harris (Stags Leap) Landfill  
Revitalization Project**

**The Harrison Township Environmental Commission is an advocate for the public interest when environmental issues are concerned. Such is presently the case in a major project in our community; the closure and conversion to usefulness of the Henry Harris/Stags Leap landfill, located on Bridgeton Pike between the 4H Fairgrounds and Harrisonville Road. In Public Information Pamphlet I, the Harrison Township Environmental Commission presents an introductory overview of the project.**

**Landfill Pamphlet I was originally published in March, 2007**

**Public Information Pamphlet I**

Portions of this 38 acre site have been used as a landfill (public dumping ground) for decades and contain both surface and sub-surface debris (household, commercial and industrial trash). It was considered a wasteland until the current owner saw an opportunity to reclaim the land and convert it to a useful, productive site that the citizens of Harrison Township would be happy to use and proud of the recovery effort.

And what an effort it has been! The reclamation work is a \$9 million project that will take 8 years to complete. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has been a constant consultant, advisor and inspector on the long path to reclamation. NJDEP inspectors are on site quarterly and for surprise inspections in between. Members of the Environmental Commission have visited the landfill site to see the scope of the project, the progress that is being made toward recovery and to assess potential future uses for the land.

The cleanup plan is to remove much of the solid debris, (including abandoned vehicles, buildings and household trash). That which remains will be contained by a 5 to 20 foot thick layer of impervious clay/marl below ground level and 20 to 30 feet of imported, certified clean soil on top. Every truckload of clean soil that is imported to the site is accompanied by a certificate of analysis. Any samples not meeting specifications are rejected. The 30 acres of the landfill area will be covered by a 30 mil thick geomembrane to prevent rainfall from soaking into the soil and washing contaminated materials away. In addition to the encapsulation, the site will also be contoured to restrict flow away from the site. Numerous monitoring wells are in place to assess the groundwater quality and movement (4 wells) and to evaluate methane emissions (17 wells) from the site. This monitoring will continue for 30 years after the closure.

Public Information Pamphlet II reviews a Special Meeting that was held on March 27, 2007 in the Harrison Township Municipal Building and was open for a dialogue with the public. The meeting was convened by the Harrison Township Committee to address the public concerns relating to the closure of the Henry Harris Landfill in Harrison Township.

Landfill Pamphlet II was originally published in August, 2008

## Public Information Pamphlet II

This public meeting was held to present information about the methods being used to close and secure the Landfill and to receive comments from the public. About 80 citizens were present to hear and comment on the testimony. Pennoni Associates, the engineering company that is conducting a detailed analysis of the site and overseeing the closure work, presented general information and described the plans for closing the landfill and securing the site from contaminant migration. The present phase of the closure consists of depositing 2 to 3 million tons of soil on the landfill area to secure it from the top. An impermeable biomembrane liner will be installed over the fill material. Senior representatives of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection were also present to verify the facts presented by the engineers and to comment on the plans for the closure. The NJDEP officials corroborated the testimony and agreed with the analytical findings presented. They detailed their site-monitoring program, which will extend for thirty years after the closure. A fact that emerged from their testimony was that this same method for landfill closure has been used successfully in closing and securing hundreds of landfills around the country.

Some members of the public questioned the motive of the developer in proceeding with this project citing the profit that might be made if/when the site is declared safe for development. Others questioned the propriety of the developer being a member of the Environmental Commission. In the three months that he was Chairman of the Environmental Commission, he recused himself from any discussion about the landfill and declined to attend any meetings of this sub-committee. He promptly resigned from the Environmental Commission upon hearing of the controversy.

Part of the closure plan is to cover the entire thirty acre site with a twenty to thirty foot layer of "NJ DEP approved" fill imported from off-site. Analysis of this fill material is ongoing and samples must meet the NJ DEP criteria before emplacement. This soil is defined as containing low levels of contaminants that are considered non-hazardous in the levels detected. If "residential clean" soil were available in the quantities required, the entire project would be prohibitively expensive. With the estimated cost of "residential grade" soil at about \$12 per ton, and the site requiring 2 to 3 million tons of soil, the cost of the soil alone would be about \$24 million to \$36 million. Additional costs, including the biomembrane liner at \$4 million, could raise the total cost to close the landfill to over \$45 million.

Some wondered why the Township did not assume responsibility for this project. It was estimated by then Mayor Koestler and Township officials that local taxes would more than triple if the Township were to finance the closure. Township officials added that the Township has tried for years to find developers to take on this closure but none were interested. The NJ DEP and Federal EPA were even disinclined to become involved because the landfill was not considered a Superfund site.

A comment made by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection officials near the end of the Special meeting is worth considering:

**"The landfill has been inactive since 1981. If no actions are taken, and the landfill is not closed and secured, it will continue to deteriorate. This will lead to possible contamination of surrounding lands and also to possible contamination of streams and the groundwater system."**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection officials who participated in this Special meeting were:

Robert Confer, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Landfill and Hazardous Waste Permitting (about 20 years of relevant experience)

Tim Bartle, Supervisor of Site Remediation, Office of Brownfield Reuse, Division of Remediation Management Response (about 15 years of relevant experience)

The Pennoni Associates engineer who presented the engineering data was:

Angelo C. Fatiga, Pennoni Associates, Consulting Engineers, Environmental Division Manager.

---

### **Public Information Pamphlet III is an update on the progress of sealing the Henry Harris Landfill in Harrison Township**

**Landfill Pamphlet III was published in March, 2009**

### **Public Information Pamphlet III**

Background – The 38 acre site of the “landfill” was a public dumping ground until it was closed to further deposits in 1981. In January, 2005, a ten-year project was begun to seal the site and protect the neighboring environment from leakage contamination. The method for sealing the site, cap and enclose, is the same method that has been used to seal hundreds of similar landfills around the country. The protocol for the closure was promulgated by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection whose inspectors are on-site regularly to ensure compliance.

#### **Progress toward completion**

Two major phases of the project are underway concurrently:

1) the installation of a 30 mil thick non-degradable, impervious geomembrane liner to prevent water from entering the core of the landfill and to prevent any seepage out. The cost of the geomembrane is perhaps the most expensive part of the project. This liner is being installed by qualified technicians and the installation is about 25% complete.

2) the emplacement and compaction of 2 to 3 million tons of fill material on top of the landfill. The fill material will create a barrier to the landfill material and provide a suitable base, once compacted, for future development. The fill material in every truckload is analyzed for contaminants and any that does not meet the strict criteria for acceptance is rejected. The emplacement of this fill material is about 15% complete. But the acquisition of a sufficient amount of fill material of acceptable quality is a critical factor in the closure. The amount available varies from month to month and is the time-driving factor affecting the closure. The availability of fill material is market-driven; as the economy slows, general construction activity slows and this reduces the availability of fill material.

In order to determine that the site is sealed so that leakage contamination does not occur, numerous monitoring wells have been bored at and around the site. These test devices measure several parameters including any off-gassing that may occur, sub-surface water movement and soil compaction. A professional engineering company with a premier reputation in landfill closures of this type, Pennoni Associates Inc., Consulting Engineers, has been hired to do the engineering

studies. Nineteen months of preliminary studies have been time well spent because the work that has been done so far has proceeded according to plan, without a problem. No unexpected issues have been encountered and all studies have shown the efficacy of the project.

There are seventeen full-time employees at the site which is checked daily by representatives from the Gloucester County Department of Health and Public Safety. The complete closure will take five to eight more years depending on fill material availability. Once the site is capped, sealed, inspected and approved, the future use of the site will be discussed. Consultants will advise appropriate uses for the land and the Harrison Township Committee and Harrison Township Planning Board will have the final Township approval for development of the site. Presently, the focus is on proper closure. Land use considerations will be addressed later.

**We hope that this information is of value to you. Please let us know what you think about the project – questions, suggestions, comments by calling the Environmental Commission at (856) 478-2164. The Environmental Commission meets in the Harrison Township Municipal Building at 114 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill on the first Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at 7:30 PM and meetings are open to the public.**

**Published by the Harrison Township Environmental Commission**

**Landfill sub-committee**

**Doris Brady**

**Phil Grous**

**Stan Hershey**

**[Mary Zeid was a co-author of previous information pamphlets (I and II) but has since moved out of the area.]**