

CITY OF
BENSON MINNESOTA
CITIZENS ADVISORY PANEL

Minutes
Citizens Advisory Panel
November 6, 2002

Members present: Bruce Holgate, Barry Jungwirth, Carolyn Lee, Jan Lundebrek, and Leroy Noreen
Members absent: Brian McNeill, Renee Hayden, Lynette Hofland, Allan Saunders, Ray Millett, Steve Verhelst, and Bill Lee
Also present: Fibrominn: Greg Langmo, and Terry Walmsley
City of Benson: City Manager Rob Wolfington

The meeting began at 6:30pm. Minutes from the September CAP meeting were not available for review and will be approved at the next meeting.

Fibrowatt Opposition

During the September CAP meeting, Barry mentioned information he found on the Internet that opposed Fibrominn and what Fibrowatt is doing. Fibrominn reviewed with the CAP the information on this website.

Terry Walmsley reviewed the comments made on the website, explaining how certain activist groups like to create bad images of their plant by calling these incinerators. He said the EPA does not call these incinerators and EPA brought this up in the air permitting. Fibrominn is a power plant and that is why the MPCA approved a waste combustor variance.

The site also talks about arsenic in poultry litter. Greg Langmo explained how arsenic has not been used in turkeys for decades. Terry also explained how their litter testing is well below what this website says. This testing information has been given to the MPCA. Based on low levels and the pollution control equipment, he said that the plant would put out less than a pound not 150 to 300 like the site said. This amount is the same as for wood burning and is like levels found in dirt and corn. He also explained how the MPCA had no concern about the arsenic based on the air toxic study submitted to the MPCA by Fibrominn.

Terry also said the website says that the plant will be dirtier than coal plants. He explained that they are very misleading because they are comparing actual emissions for coal plants with worst-case emissions for Fibrominn. He said that information was sent to PCA that showed that actual emissions would be way below coal plants and the MPCA agreed.

Terry Walmsley also talked about dioxin emissions and that these will be very low. He said that the Thetford plant has done a lot of testing and the MPCA was impressed with how low they

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were. He showed a thick USEPA study of dioxins and showed that burning anything creates dioxin like candles, cigarettes, stoves, diesel trucks, fireplaces, backyard garbage burning, and coal and wood power plants. Terry also showed a study that dioxins have been found in buried clay and are not just man made. He also said that the MPCA said that dioxin emissions are higher for coal plants and wood plants and the air toxic study submitted to the MPCA said that dioxin is a million to a billion times lower than levels that are a health problem.

Terry said all of the issues raised by the website were looked at by MPCA.

Air Permit

Terry Walmsley went over what happened with the air permitting since the last CAP meeting in September. He explained that many of the comments on the website were addressed to MPCA during the comment period. The MPCA also answered many of the comments, for example showing that burning poultry litter will be renewable energy according to EPA. He explained Terry, Jan and Carolyn talked about the Citizen Board meetings on Oct 21 and 22. He said that the PCA had 135 letters about the permit and 88 wanted the plant and 47 were against the plant. Almost all of the letters against the plant came from outside Minnesota like New York City, Arizona, and California. They said this plant will help factory farming and they are opposed to cruelty to animals. The 88 letters were mostly from Benson. The Citizens Board said the local letters for the plant were very important.

They talked about the meetings and said the Sierra Club sent a letter at the last minute but Fibrominn responded to it anyway. Most of the issues had already been looked at by PCA and the permit contained several of the recommendations already. Fibrominn agreed to one of the changes for more mercury testing and this is now in the permit. Fibrominn talked to the Citizen Board during the meetings about the types of fuel they will use, the air testing in England, and low mercury emissions. Mayor Kittelson, Rob Wolfington, Rick Horecka, Jan Lundebrek, all spoke at the meeting and supported the plant. Some opponents also spoke from Clean Water Action and other groups. The Department of Health also spoke against the plant on the first night but on the second night they apologized about the comments.

The Citizen board passed the air permit unanimously including Commissioner Studders of PCA and a member that works for Clean Water Action. There still may be an appeal but Fibrominn does not think this will work.

Next meeting date and agenda items for next meeting

The next meeting will likely be scheduled for early January. No specific topics were brought up but the CAP would like to learn more about the construction and when groundbreaking will take place.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.