

2229 Main Street Oversight Committee

Members: Paul Boehm, Ray Bruttomesso, Deborah Farnsworth, Len Rappoli, Pam Rockwell, Fred Seward, Kerry Diskin and Board of Selectmen liaison Elise Woodward

The 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee was formed to monitor the cleanup at Starmet, formerly Nuclear Metals, Inc. (NMI), a former defense contractor that is now a superfund site. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the agency in charge of the cleanup. Currently EPA is overseeing a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS). The investigation will determine the extent of the contamination at the site and the pathways by which the public may be exposed. The feasibility study will develop possible cleanup strategies. The EPA has hired the consulting firm *de maximis inc.* to conduct the RI/FS.

During 2009, *de maximis inc.* began using the soil and water sampling data collected over the past few years to define areas of risk at the site. During the spring, the committee commented on adequacy of the data collection, and suggested that certain areas be tested for PCBs. In December, the EPA released a preliminary version of the baseline human health risk assessment – the next step in determining what areas of the site are contaminated enough to require remediation. This site is contaminated with depleted uranium, beryllium, and other laboratory chemicals. There are also PCBs located in most of the areas where there is uranium contamination in surface soil, which means that these areas will definitely trigger a remediation action. (These areas are all close to buildings and enclosed by fences.) A major plume of uranium in the ground above the bedrock has also been identified heading from the former holding basin, under the buildings, and towards the Assabet River. The committee is currently developing comments about the risk assessment.

In 2009 the Committee continued to advocate with the EPA to remove the buildings at the Starmet site. There is radioactive contamination in all parts of the buildings, including offices, due mostly to a leaky roof and standing water. In some areas, water is above the level of the electrical outlets. This is a particular danger to emergency workers who might have to respond at the site. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts filed a complaint in Suffolk Superior Court against Starmet alleging that Starmet violated a 2007 Administrative Consent to permanently vacate the site. The complaint sought a permanent injunction ordering Starmet to vacate the site by June 31, 2009. At the end of 2009, Starmet had still not complied. The state is slated to file a Summary Judgment motion in early 2010 with the Court to have Starmet comply. In February 2009, the United States District Court determined that Starmet was responsible for the remediation costs. The EPA is negotiating with the principal responsible parties (mostly the US Army) to pay the costs of the removal of the buildings.

More information about the Starmet cleanup can be found at the following websites. The committee does not have control over the content of these sites:

- www.nmisite.org is the website created by the contractor *de maximis*. It includes a list of the current activities at the site, including data and maps from the sampling that has been completed.
- The EPA also has a website with historical information. Go to www.epa.gov/region1/superfund/findsite/fndindex.htm and search for “Nuclear Metals”.
- www.crewconcord.org is the website for the environmental advocacy group CREW.