

2229 Main Street Oversight Committee
2013 Annual Report

Members: Paul Boehm, Kerry Diskin, Deborah Farnsworth, Len Rappoli, Pam Rockwell, Fred Seward, Steve Verrill, Board of Selectmen liaison Steven Ng

The 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee was formed to monitor the cleanup at the site previously occupied by Starmet, formerly Nuclear Metals, Inc. (NMI), a former defense contractor. This site was put on the EPA national priorities list in 2001 and is now a superfund site. Currently the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is overseeing a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) for remediating the contamination at the site. The investigation has determined the extent of the contamination at the site and the pathways by which the public and wildlife may be exposed to risk. The feasibility study will develop possible cleanup strategies. EPA has hired the consulting firm *de maximis inc.* to conduct the RI/FS.

The site is contaminated with depleted uranium in the soil and water, and beryllium inside the buildings. There are also PCBs located in most of the areas where there is uranium contamination in surface soil. (These areas are all close to buildings and enclosed by fences.) A deep, slow moving plume of uranium in the ground water above the bedrock has also been identified heading from the former holding basin, under the buildings, in the direction of the Assabet River. A large concentration of uranium below the old holding basin extends into the water table and is the source of the groundwater contamination. The level of the organic chemical dioxane in bedrock under the site is also substantial enough to require remediation, and volatile organic compounds deep under the site may pose a vapor hazard to buildings that are built on the site in the future.

The 2229 Main Street Oversight Committee meets regularly with EPA and environmental advocacy group CREW to discuss the technical details of the cleanup. In 2013, EPA asked for the committee to review possible remediation strategies for the site and to consider the future uses of the site. The committee supports cleanup options that include removing contaminated soils and sediments and disposing of them offsite. The committee prefers that uranium contamination under the holding basin that is too deep to remove be contained with well proven technology such as adding cement down to the bedrock to turn the contaminated soils into concrete. And the committee believes that in the future, the Town of Concord may wish to use this site for solar energy production, vehicle maintenance and storage, affordable housing, and/or recreation. In written comments, the Town communicated to EPA that the Town would like the site remediated so that all of the land can be used after the cleanup, and there will not be restrictions on activities on the surface.

Work is in progress to disassemble the buildings at the site. In 2013, *de maximis* set up new loading docks and scales. They packed and removed almost 3 million pounds of contaminated materials from inside the buildings (152 container trucks and 2 tank trucks.) In June, committee member Len Rappoli toured the buildings at the Starmet site and observed the progress that has been made sorting and removing materials inside the building. The plans call for the big machines in the building to be disassembled and removed in early 2014, and the buildings themselves to be removed shortly afterwards. There is 24 hour private security at the site. and

automatic gates allow Concord Fire and Police to enter the property and drive around the entire building complex at any time of the day or night.

2229 Main Street Oversight committee meetings always include time to answer questions from concerned citizens. EPA project manager Melissa Taylor is in Concord regularly to meet with town staff and for technical group meetings with CREW and the 2229 Main Street Committee. She is also available to meet with citizens who have personal concerns about activities at the site. 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 inc.* It includes a list of the current activities at the site, including data and maps from the sampling that has been completed.
- EPA descriptions of the site is at **<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/nar1605.htm>**
- **<http://www.epa.gov/region1/superfund/sites/nmi/287738.pdf>** is an EPA fact sheet about the building removal project at the site.