

2229 Main Street Oversight Committee

Members: Kerry Diskin, David Erickson, Len Rappoli, Pam Rockwell, Fred Seward, Candace Wight, Mike Worthy, and Board of Selectmen liaison Ann Shapiro

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. This site is contaminated with depleted uranium, beryllium, some volatile organic materials, and other laboratory chemicals. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is managing the cleanup. In 2003 they identified, covered, and fenced outdoor areas that require further investigation. The next step in the cleanup process is a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS). The investigation will determine the extent of the contamination at the site and the pathways that 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. The RI/FS was the focus of most of the committee's work in 2004, and probably will be for the next few years.

In 2002 Concord Town Meeting allocated \$10,000 to hire a consultant to review documents relating to the cleanup at Starmet. This year, the committee worked with the Town's consultant, Environmental Strategies Corporation to review the workplan for the RI/FS. The workplan details where and how soil, water, and other samples will be collected and evaluated. It includes a safety plan for the sampling process and descriptions of the how the future risk will be determined for people and the environment.

There are still many parts of the workplan that will be changed as the work progresses. It is expected that test results from soil and water sampling will lead to more questions and point out more areas that need evaluation. The committee and Citizen's Research and Environmental Watch (CREW) have gotten together with the EPA and its contractors to form the Nuclear Metals, Inc. Site Technical Group. This group meets every other month to review the raw data coming in from the field and to discuss current operations. Outdoor soil sampling and well drilling began in October and already new data have helped determine where to place sampling wells.

The technical group also reviewed the safety plan for the first outdoor drum removal. In 1968 a cache of drums was buried next to the cooling pond at Nuclear Metals. de maximis determined that the safest way to sample these drums was to excavate them and repack them into large metal disposal containers. They worked closely with the technical group and the Concord Fire Department to develop a safety plan for this excavation. During the week of actual digging the Concord Fire Department was on the site every day. The excavation was safely finished on December 17. The air was monitored for radiation. Dust and air samples were collected. There was no radiation or beryllium detected in the air samples during the excavation. The drums and debris were dug up and repacked into three

30 yard metal containers, which remain locked inside a fenced, monitored area on the site. The materials included lab equipment, bottles of chemicals, buckets of metal filings, buried drums, and old machinery. The sides and bottom of the hole were sampled and the area was marked with a heavy fabric liner, refilled with soil, and regraded. The samples of the soil, drum contents, and debris are currently being evaluated. Similar excavations may occur at an old landfill area on the Starmet property later this year.

Another important part of the cleanup is the removal of 3700 drums of uranium waste that are stored inside the Starmet buildings. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has secured funding to remove these drums and is accepting bids for the removal work. This removal involves loading the drums into trucks and driving them to a disposal site and is not expected to pose any risk to Concord residents. We expect the removal to be completed in 2005.

In the coming year the committee hopes to set up a web site on the Town's web page that shows links to sites that have current and historical information. 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.
- 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.